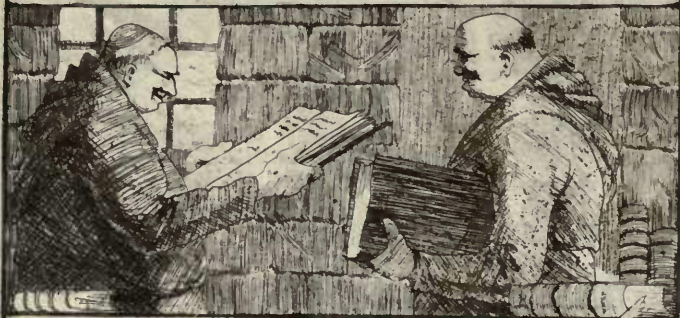


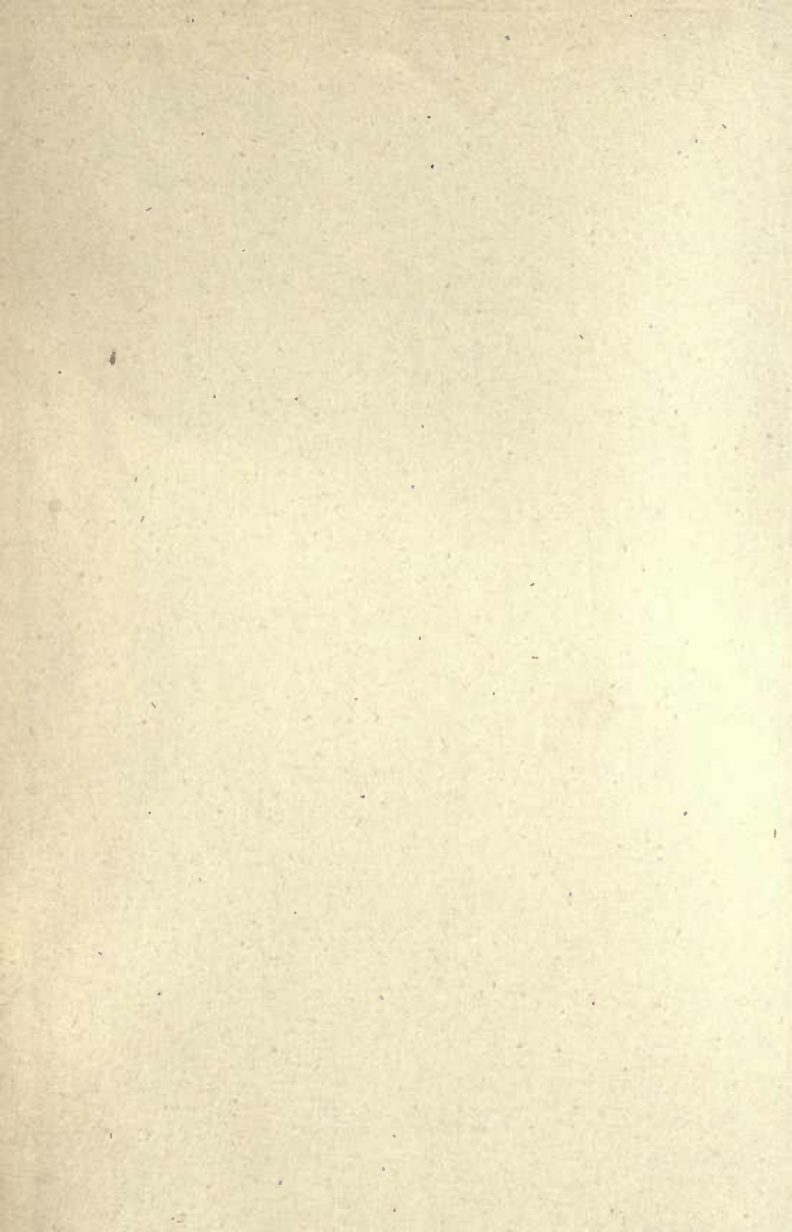
Cornelius O Bond
✍

FROM AMONG THE BOOKS OF



IRENE and EDMUND
ANDREWS





CORNELIUS O'DOWD

CORNELIUS O'DOWD

UPON

MEN AND WOMEN

AND

OTHER THINGS IN GENERAL

I care not a fig
For Tory or Whig,
But sit in a bowl and kick round me

SECOND SERIES

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLXV

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE

TO
THE HONOURABLE
JUDGE LONGFIELD, LL.D.
ETC. ETC.

MY DEAR LONGFIELD,

I NEITHER EXPECT NOR ASK YOU TO READ MORE OF THIS VOLUME THAN THESE LINES IN WHICH I DEDICATE IT TO YOU—A SOUVENIR OF ALL OUR PLEASANT EVENINGS TOGETHER LONG AGO, WHEN WE TALKED OVER SCORES OF SUCH THINGS AS THESE IN HAPPIER VEIN THAN I CAN NOW WRITE OR EVEN THINK OF THEM.

YOUR OLD FRIEND,

C. O'D.

LAGO MAGGIORE, *January* 1865.

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CORNELIUS O'DOWD.

MORAL AID.

I WAS just preparing for a day's fly-fishing, had sent off rods and nets and tackle to my boat, when my friend arrived, as breathless as a man might after some hundred miles' railroading, to tell me he had heard a great part of the debate on Disraeli's motion, and to impart to me his impressions of the various speakers.

"Corny," said he, "I wish you had been there. These fellows are too long-winded, and they are marvellously given to saying what has just been said by some one else on their own side a short time before."

I agreed with him perfectly. The summary in the 'Times' is as good as the whole debate. We all of us knew, besides, pretty much what each speaker

would say, and how he would say it; still it was a little strange to see Gladstone, at the very moment that he is bidding, and bidding high, for popular favour, assail those organs of public opinion—the newspapers—so universally regarded as the especial defence of democracy.

For my own part I liked Seymour Fitzgerald best; he came nearer to the true issue than any one else. As to the challenge, What is your own policy? it was too grossly absurd to be listened to. What would be said of the doctor who had destroyed his patient's chance of recovery, saying to the newly-called-in physician, "What is it that you advise? let us see if *you* can save him"?

This was all that the Ministry were able to say: Don't talk of *our* blunders, but tell us how will *you* cure the patient? Now, I reply, give him to *me*, as he was given to *you*. Call me in at the first seizure—not at his agony—and I will answer you. First of all, I would never have either ignored at first, or subsequently insulted, the public opinion of a great nation, even though that great nation was in a passion, and not talking the soundest good sense; secondly, I would never have suggested to a weak but proud people, that the price of any assistance to them must be certain concessions, which, when made, were left totally unrecognised and unrewarded; and,

lastly, I would no more have gone to France for aid, than I would ask a man to back my bill, who knew, by refusing his name, he could smash *my* credit, and whose manifest interest it was to impugn *my* solvency and elevate his own. But certainly, above all things—and to my amazement no speaker on the Opposition side alluded to this—I never would have so mystified the whole British nation—exciting a sympathy for Denmark, subscriptions for her wounded, and aid for her destitute, with abuse of an ancient ally, and a cowering, craven, helpless dread of what France might and could, and possibly would, do ; till, in the conflict of our feelings—some of them honourable enough, others just the opposite—we have presented ourselves before Europe in a light, that only the remembering what we once were rescues from being despicable.

It is not very easy to say how the Danes would have fared if, instead of depending on England, they had addressed themselves originally to France. From a variety of causes—some creditable enough to her, others less meritorious—France is fond of these “missions.” They redound usually to her influence in Europe ; they raise her prestige as a great military power, and occasionally too they pay in a more commercial and palpable manner ; so that, like the Irishman who “married for love and a trifle of

money," she has the pleasure of feeling that even her generosity has not been bad as a speculation.

I really do not see why the Danes did not think of this. They knew—all the world knows—that of the two sorts of aid one is patented by France, and is called "material aid," being an efficient, active, and able support, to distinguish it from the English article called "moral aid," which it is perfectly *immaterial* to any one whether he has it or not.

Now there is no doubt the Danes were perfectly well aware which of these two they wanted; but the misfortune was, they did not hit upon the right road. They wanted a strong "Pick-me-up," but they turned the wrong corner, and got into the Temperance Hotel! Had they had the time and the temper for it, it would have done them good to have heard our praises of our own tap, and how superior in all invigorating properties the fresh, sparkling fluid from our pump was, to the hot, stimulating, exciting liquor of the "man over the way."

They would have heard, too, how, though we once were licensed for strong drink, and had a roaring trade, yet we gradually had gone on diluting and diluting, till we arrived at last at the pure element, which, strange to say, a few old customers of the house still continued to believe to be spirit; though, whenever a new-comer dropped in, he left

it there untasted, and went over to the other establishment.

The mistake of the poor Danes was irreparable. They drank such gallons of our well, that they had no stomach for anything after it.

But, in all sober seriousness, when shall we have heard the last of this rotten cant, "Moral Aid"—own brother, I believe, of that other humbug, "Masterly Inactivity"? Moral aid is the bread-pill of the quack doctor—efficacious only when there's nothing the matter with you.

Had the good Samaritan been one of the moral-aid disciples, he would have given the sick man an eloquent lecture on wounds, punctured and incised. He would have explained the dangers of hæmorrhage, primary and secondary; he would have expatiated on union by "first intention" and by "granulation;" and, lastly, he would have assured the sufferer that it was by a special Providence that he himself had come by, otherwise the sick man would have died without ever hearing one of these valuable truths. Not a drop of wine and oil, no bandaging, no mere "material aid," would he have descended to: these are the appliances of a very inferior philanthropy.

Will nobody give us a tabular view of the working results of the two systems? Perhaps, indeed, they

would tell us that it was moral aid drove the French out of the Peninsula, and moral aid was the support we lent to Europe on the field of Waterloo. Do not for a moment mistake me. I neither disparage sympathy nor despise advice. I have seen far too much of life not to prize both highly; but give them to me for what they are, and not as substitutes for something with no affinity to them. I can be very grateful for a drink of butter-milk when I am thirsty; but don't say to me, "Isn't that better and more wholesome than all the claret that ever was bottled? Thank your stars that you came in here, for my neighbour yonder would have plied you with La Rose and Margaux, and they ruin a man's stomach."

I know of no national practice so universal in England as "advice-giving." It is a mania of our people, growing out of the combined result of parliamentary government and immense national prosperity. Every one in Great Britain who is richer than his neighbour has a prescriptive right to advise him. I never knew the man who dared to dispute that privilege; hence, as we regard ourselves as so much wealthier than the "beggarly foreigner," we have caught the habit of imposing our opinion at all times and places, and for the life of us we cannot see how any should oppose it. The self-conceit en-

gendered by this process has made us something little short of detested abroad ! What lectures have I not heard Brown and Jones administer to foreigners of real distinction ! What sage suggestions to imitate this or that custom of England ! totally ignorant, as they might be, of some insuperable obstacle to their suggested improvement.

In the old days of the Peninsular war, we were pretty much like our neighbours. What we could not do by men, we did by money. Now, however, we have grown wiser, and will not spend either. This universal medicine, "moral aid," moral co-operation, or whatever it be called, is the cheap panacea for all troubles. Not but it has met a rather rough experience lately. The Germans wouldn't taste it at all ; and I doubt greatly if the Danes will soon ask for another dose of it.

We may try to laugh at it, but it's too sore to be a joke. One would like, if he could, to take the jest in good part, and show no ill-temper ; but it pushes patience too hard to see the hard-won glories of Old England so frittered away and dissipated, that every trait by which our fathers stamped manhood on the nation is now insolently denied us, and we are told to go back to our cotton-mills and coal-mines, and leave the game of war and its ambitions to others.

They have a saying in Italy, that there are two

things no man ever asks for in vain there—light for his cigar, or the Cross of St Maurice and St Lazare. So in England we are splendidly lavish of our good advice. Would that we could practise a little parsimony!

For many reasons we ought not to have taken the German vapour and bluster so ill. It is very rarely these dull folk indulge themselves with the luxury of being angry. And as for the various modes in which they were to wreak a vengeance on England, they were simply laughable. Perhaps it may proceed from our very affinity—but strange it is, there are few nations have commercially less need of each other than Germany and England.

Imagine that Prussian threat t'other day, that if England moved hand or foot, they'd march down and take Hanover! By what confusion of even Berlin brains they fancied this could affect England, is hard to say. They evidently never heard of the remark of the absentee Irish landlord, when he was told that the people had shot his agent. "Strange nation the Irish! What an extraordinary notion it was to imagine that by shooting my agent they could possibly intimidate *me*!"

To conclude, if we are never to deal in any other ware than "moral aid," let us be frank and open about it. Let us dress the army in drab, and put

broad-brims on the navy. Above all, let not our newspapers be filled with target-practice, and the relative merits of Armstrong and Whitworth. The neatest duelling-pistols in the world would never get their owner a character for courage after he had refused to fight. I say over and over again, we ought not to go to war. Some hundreds of savages at the end of the earth are giving us quite as much war as we want; and to face armies raised by conscription, with an army supplied by voluntary enlistment, is as rank nonsense as to assert that the financial burdens of a nation could be as easily met by voluntary contributions as by enforced taxation. And let any one imagine Mr Gladstone standing with a plate at Whitehall, and, even with all the courteous persuasiveness for which he is known, saying to the passers-by, "You are requested to leave something for the support of the institution," and is it likely that the results would bear comparison with the income-tax? Conceive the impatient anxiety with which we should await the financial statement! Picture to your mind how eagerly we should look out for a captivating manner and a seductive address in our Chancellor of the Exchequer! Ay, and imagine the scores of letters in the 'Times' from indignant citizens, who "were really anxious to contribute their mite towards re-

lieving the burdens of the State, but who were deterred by the stern aspect and forbidding exterior of this or that Right Hon. Gentleman, and who now ask, Can nothing be devised less offensive to public feeling than this? Is it not possible, in this great nation of thirty millions, to assess the revenue in some mode less insulting to the sympathies of Englishmen?"

Whatever is voluntary will very seldom be general, and never will be universal. We want soldiers pretty much as we want money; and if it should happen that we need either in large quantities, I am pretty certain we must not depend on Volition for the supply.

SERIALS AND THREE VOLUMES.

I LIKE what in our modern slang are called serial stories. The writers understand one requirement at least of their trade—they do not give too much at a time; and in so far they resemble the heads of the profession, the old Eastern story-tellers, who only told the Caliph each evening enough to set him asleep. Now this alone is a great point.

Another advantage is this—they cannot cram into their limited space any of those long-winded descriptions, especially of scenery, which the three-volume people are so prone to inflict; neither have they so much of the page open to emotional expatiation. They are bound by their very limits to be more short, sharp, and decisive.

Lastly, they must endeavour to interest by something else than story—that is, they must try what can be done to amuse by humoristic views of life,

shrewd touches of character, quaint pictures of people not the less recognisable that they are not met with every day, and occasionally—which Three Volume probably thinks beneath him—they must make us laugh.

In the very fact that the reader is not bound to them beyond the monthly part before him, lies their heaviest obligation to interest him. It is like a shilling stage, and if you dislike the conveyance, or feel tired of the company, you can get out and walk home. For all these reasons I incline much to the serial.

I do not know how it may be with others, but for myself I am not over-grateful to the man who invests his story with that amount of interest that engrosses my attention too far, and in this way turns me from the real business of life to involve me in cares and sorrows that have no reality. I want to be amused by the novel pretty much as I feel amused by the play—that is, I want what will present a certain number of pictures to my mind without the cost of being obliged to retain them thereafter. If I be obliged to do this, the novel becomes a burthen, not a relaxation. I want, besides, the writer to let me so far into his mind that I may know what *he* thinks is droll, what strange, what picturesque, what attractive, what ridiculous.

When I have arrived at that understanding—any one number will suffice for so much—I am able to guess if I should care for more of his company. The three-volume man affords me no such clue as this. All he is thinking of is his wind-up in the last volume. It is for the grand finish alone he cares; his heart, like the Irish postilion's, is fixed on keeping a "trot for the town." No matter how he stumbled and staggered during the stage, so that he comes up to the door at last with whip-cracking, and the jaded team spirited up to a lively tramp.

The serial writer, too, performs usually to a larger public, and, consequently, is less addicted to conventionalities than Three Volume, who has a more select few for his audience, and who could not so easily stoop to the vulgarity of common people, and their ways and doings. But, as I have said already, the serial is more prone to make me laugh, and for this great gift I prize him most of all. I have very grave doubts if age has anything heavier in all its inflictions than in the difficulty—yearly increasing in a terrific ratio—the difficulty of enjoying a good laugh. For my own part, baldness, adiposity, and suchlike, are all lighter evils to me than the gravity I feel stealing over me, the little tolerance I have for small fun, and the growing conviction that the pleasant

people have gone home, and that *I* am left to walk back with the dreary ones.

That my own capacity for the enjoyment is not totally blunted, I can test by seeing how the old racy humour of Molière and Cervantes—how Scott, too, and Sydney Smith continue to amuse me. What has become of this gift? is it gone and lost, like the art of painting on glass, like the glaze of Luca della Robbia, or the wonderful pottery-paste of Maestro Giorgio? One thing is certain, Three Volume has none of it; and, latterly, the serial has not more than enough to season his quality and remind you of by-gones. As nothing so much disgusts a man with wine-drinking as plying him for a while with bad liquor, so there is no such certain death to the appreciation of real humour as in the race of small jokers perpetually letting off a fire of petty drolleries suggested by the passing events of the hour. If there be a public for these, heaven help the real humorist when he craves an audience! That there is a public for them he would be a bold man that should deny, and a very large and a very faithful public, too!

I do not make a great demand on my novelist. I ask him to help me through a stray hour of *ennui*, a dreary half-day of rainy weather in a dull house, the time I have to wait for my train, or the morning in

which the post has either failed or brought nothing of any interest. I protest loudly and *in toto* against accepting the story-teller as either preacher or teacher. I will neither listen to him about law reform, nor prison discipline, nor madhouses, nor public schools. Let him, if he must, season his pages by the introduction of these institutions ; but let him not insinuate his own theories about their management, or pretend to tell me how much more smoothly would suits in Equity go were he the Chancellor, or what a happy day would it be for the lunatics did the writer sit in Whitehall with the dignity of a Commissioner. I never heard an amateur fiddler that one would have given a sixpence to ; and I have rarely seen one of those would-be reformers in fiction who approached his subject with even the vaguest knowledge of its details, or any conception of its difficulties. “Mark me, Mr Vagabond,” said Junius to Garrick, when the actor, forgetting his real province, had attempted a negotiation with the publisher to betray the name of the great satirist—“mark me, Mr Vagabond ; stick to your pantomimes.”

I do not think there is anything so good in Alexandre Dumas as his total exemption from this vice. He never tries the didactic, and I respect him for his abstinence. Let not the clown, when he casts a somersault in the circus, tell me that he means to

emblematised the motion of the earth ! *Suum cuique*. Let the story-teller understand that his mission is simply to amuse without any outrage to good manners, or any offence to good morals. Let him be as pleasant as he can, and leave the task of making the world better and wiser to men who have to accept the charge with heavier responsibilities than attach to tale-writing.

Scott understood something about his craft, and something about the world too. Had he deemed that fiction was the proper channel to instil correct notions about hospitals for the blind, drainage of towns, ragged schools, or reformatories, we should doubtless have had these and suchlike discussed, though, perhaps, we might have lost something in not having the 'Antiquary,' 'Ivanhoe,' and a score more as good.

Balzac, also, wrote indifferent good novels, and knew one sort of life as few others ever did, and yet he never addressed himself to assail some institution or attack some system. He knew well that no group of people ever yet lived who revolved round *one* grievance; that life is a very particoloured affair, and, however a particular wrong may tinge existence, that the daily business of the world goes on amidst innumerable cares and troubles, and joys and anxieties, and it is of these fiction ought to treat,

showing as truthfully as she can what human nature does, says, thinks, and endures, with very little reference to some great stumbling-block, which, after all, has hurt the shins of only one, perhaps, in the company.

That the ordinary business of life can go on amidst the most terrible convulsions, and men follow the pursuits of ambition, of pleasure, or of money-getting, unaffected by that great event which in history will absorb the whole page, will be readily acknowledged by any one who will turn to the memoirs of the years of the French Revolution, or the Magazines of Ireland during '98. Jeffrey, in one of his essays, remarks on this, and says, that while posterity will be entirely occupied by the dreadful phantom of the Reign of Terror, nothing in the actual records of the time will recall it.

It is hard to believe or to understand it, but the literature of France in those dreadful years ran upon idyls and odes and pastorals. Pastorals, when the creak of the *charrette* that carried the victims to the scaffold was the one sound heard in the streets! when the channels ran with blood, amidst the carnage of helpless women, and the *noyades* of the Loire! Pastorals! One is inclined to ask, Is it in ethics as in optics, and does the eye, gorged and inflamed by red, turn to seek repose, to rest upon green?

Now, if Fiction had to deal with this era, we should find the guillotine in every page. Every event and every action would revolve around the scaffold; the headsman everywhere — everywhere the axe: and what truth would there be in such a portraiture?

The Irish rebellion of '98 was, while it lasted, a dreadful scene of cruelty and carnage on all sides; and yet I have heard more stories of convivial gaiety, more narratives of country-house life and hospitality, of that period, than all I ever remember to have heard of any other time of Irish history.

Of what is now going on in America, let Wall Street and Fifth Avenue, in their respective spheres, tell, how much sympathy is felt for the countless thousands dying in every form of agony, or coming back, pitiably maimed and crippled, to drag out lives of suffering and penury! Fiction would doubtless paint New York breathless for the last news from the battle-field; and so it might, but not for the record of victory or defeat as a source of triumph or sorrow, but simply to know how it would affect the exchanges, or react on the price of gold.

To my thinking, 'Les Misérables' is only a blue-book gone mad; and a census return done by a sensational hand would be just as amusing reading as any of this school.

There is another practice of certain novelists which annoys me not a little—that is, to dish up the same characters either as principals or secondaries in every story. It is not merely objectionable on the ground that character-drawing is almost the best part of fiction, as it is certainly the most instructive ; but because there is such poverty in invention, or such inveterate indolence, implied in the practice. It is bad enough if a strolling company must perform ‘*Coriolanus*’ with the same corps that gave the ‘*Road to Ruin* ;’ and it is hard to surrender one’s sympathy to Romeo, when he perpetually recalls Jeremy Diddler : still, these poor creatures do their utmost so to disguise their identities that you shall not detect them. Whereas, in the novel, it is the same dreary personage that broke your heart in the ‘*Three Crows*,’ that is now dogging your steps in ‘*Drivelling Manor* ;’ and the Bore that cost you the thread of one story by your efforts to skip him, turns up in a totally different book to be your misery once more.

When Sancho was relating the memorable story of the shepherd to his master, he found himself suddenly arrested in his narrative by Don Quixote’s inability to tell how many sheep had been ferried over the stream. “’Fore God,” said he, “if you have forgotten the score, it is impossible for me to con-

tinue the story." These people are, however, more exacting still, for they call on you to bear in mind who was each person's father and mother, who their uncles and aunts and good friends. A name turns up suddenly in the story without any intimation who he is and whence he comes. You turn back to trace him; alas! it is to a story published the year before, and nine others dating successively as many years back, you must go—a labour that may possibly not be requited by any interest intended to surround him. In the reading of these books, if not well "posted" in all by the same author, and gifted with a retentive memory besides, a man feels like a *parvenu* suddenly introduced into a society where, except himself, each knows and is known to his neighbour. He has the humiliating consciousness that in a company so intimately united, he himself, the intruder, is *de trop*. He sees that every one knows the Duke of Allsorts, and that nobody is surprised when Lady Mumford appears, and he naturally concludes that he has no business in a society where he is the only one who has to inquire who are those around him. Why will not these writers give us with a new book a chronological table, and let us learn who begat whom?

But, in point of fact, the thing is harder than mere

chronology—it is far more ; it is the Darwinian theory applied to fiction, and the law of development introduced into tale-writing. The *homunculus* of some book of ten years ago, may be the foreground figure of a later work ; and the child you have scarcely noticed at one time, may have been developed into the grandmother of a present heroine.

This is simply intolerable. I ask for a story, and you give me a census return ; I want a tale, and I get an extract from a baptismal registry.

There are a few characters of fiction, and really they are very few, that could not recur too often. It would be difficult to shut the door against Sancho, or Falstaff, or perhaps Dugald Dalgetty ; but have the writers I have just been speaking of given us any creations like these ? or are not their personages only real in the one respect, that they are as tiresome as living men ?

Let me record one splendid exception from this judgment in him who has given to our fiction-literature a racy vigour and a freshness which only genius can give. The greatest imaginative writer, unquestionably, since Shakespeare, is the author of 'Chuzzlewit.' With him we encounter no repetitions ; all is varied, novel, and interesting as nature herself ; and this great master of humour moves us to tears or

laughter without the semblance of an effort on his part; and as for those "inexpensive guests" that sit beside our fireplaces at lone hours, or stroll with us in our solitary rambles, we owe more of them to Charles Dickens than to any other writer of the century.

ABUSE OF IRELAND.

DANIEL O'CONNELL used to say that he was the best abused man in Europe ; had he only lived till now he would have seen that the practice has been extended to all his countrymen of every class and condition, of every shade of politics, and every section of opinion. The leading journal especially has adopted this line, and the adjective Irish has been assumed as a disqualifier to all and everything it can be applied to. I am sure that this is not generous—I have my doubts if it be just.

First of all, we are abused too indiscriminately, and for faults diametrically the opposite of each other ; secondly, we are sneered at for qualities which the greater nation is not sorry to utilise ; and, last of all, we are treated as such acknowledged admitted inferiors as makes it a very polite piece of condescension for Englishmen to occupy themselves, even in their leisure hours, by admonishing us of our

faults, and reminding us of our shortcomings. Our unhappy country, too, whose greatest crime we used to think was the being our birthplace, is now discovered to be a damp tract of dreary bog—unfruitful, unwholesome, and unpleasant—without a soil to grow corn, or a sun to ripen it; spongy if undrained, and if drained, a “parched expanse of arid limestone.” This is not cheerful, any more than to hear that it rains ten months in the year, and that if it only rained nine we should have no grass, and without grass could no longer fatten bees for Britons to feed on, that being the last resource left us in our destitution.

Whatever we do, or attempt to do, by some unhappy fatality seems wrong. If we stay at home, we are told that we are a poor-spirited set of creatures, satisfied with mere subsistence, and content to grovel on in our poverty. If we emigrate, we are reproached as people who have no loyalty, nor any attachment to the land of their birth.

One great authority declared that Ireland could never grow wheat, and yet Mr Whiteside t’other day assured us that we were ruined by the corn-laws. This is mighty hard to understand, and I own it puzzles me considerably.

“They’ve raised the price of malt, I hear,
But what has malt to do with table-beer?”

Surely if the country was unsuited to the grape, it could scarcely be injured by a tax on the exportation of wine!

Again, we are over-populated. The fatal tendency of the Irish to be venturous led to early marriages and large families; and it was a mercy to think that some had taken courage and gone off to America.

Then came another with 'Adam Smith' in his hand, to protest that population meant riches—even a population of Irishmen; and, last of all, an indignant patriot declared that the day was not perhaps very distant, when Ireland should be peopled by Scotchmen.

The 'Times,' however, capped all. It explained that Ireland must abandon tillage and forego manufactures—that her climate was unstable, her soil unfruitful, and her people lazy. She had, however, here and there, principally on the seaboard, some spots of picturesque beauty; and that Englishmen, partly out of a liking for scenery, partly from pity, might occasionally come over and look at these, the duties of guide and cicerone being assigned to the native—who thus at last would have found an employment up to the level of his capacity and his inclination. This is no exaggeration of mine—I am inventing nothing—I read, twice over too, the article that contained this suggestion. It was made in perfect good faith, just

as the writer might have counselled a North American savage to limit himself to the manufacture of mocassins, and not take to regular shoemaking.

Irishmen were deliberately told, by an authority that assumes to be not only the political director, but the moral arbiter of the nation, that there was nothing better for them to do than turn guides to Cockney tourists.

If poor Paddy's circumstances were such as to permit his having some leisure time at his disposal, I can easily believe what amusement he might obtain from the occupation recommended—what food for laughter he would derive from town-bred ignorance and moneyed self-sufficiency—what stores of fun he would lay by from the crude remarks and stupid commentaries of wandering bagmen and the like ; but the fact of reducing to a profession what ought only to be a pastime, gives a very different colour to the career.

The writer of this suggestion may not, however, have seen, as I have, a heavy traveller from the manufacturing districts gaining his Irish experiences from a barefooted, ragged, half-famished native ; and it is such an exhibition of intense drollery and sly raillery as one cannot readily forget : the quick instinct as to the nature of the stranger, his class and his habits—the subtle appreciation of the amount of

his credulity—the racy enjoyment of his manifold blunders, and the thorough zest felt by a poor, half-naked, potato-fed creature for his mental superiority over well-clad, well-to-do “Manchester”—made up elements that worked into something highly dramatic.

Let me assure the happy discoverer of this theory for Ireland that, so far from increasing the opportunities to Paddy to measure his native quickness with Saxon stolidity, he would be wiser not to give heedless occasion for the comparison.

Now, these slights are not peacemakers, and we, the poorer and the more helpless people, ought at least to have kind words; and yet there is one more grievance which, I own, is, to my own feeling, harder to bear than even these. It is the assertion—made so frequently, declared so roundly, and proclaimed so unblushingly, that it has passed into a popular belief—that any Irishman who has ever risen to high honours and great renown, will be found, on examination, to possess traits and characteristics the very opposite to those that distinguish his countrymen—being, in short, a sort of *lusus naturæ* Paddy—who knows if not a Saxon egg, surreptitiously stolen, and placed in the Celtic nest! Sterne they only half give us. Swift some deny us altogether; for my own part, I’d not fight for him. Goldsmith they only

concede to us whenever they disparage him. As for Edmund Burke, he puzzles them sorely. Burke, the great orator, the master of every form of eloquence, we might be permitted to claim, because, by calling it Irish eloquence, its condemnation was fixed for ever. But Burke the logician—Burke the statesman—Burke the philosopher—the man who foresaw more in the working out of events than any man of his age, who could trace effects to their causes, and predicate from the actual what must be the future—him they deny us, and declare that all these gifts were English. There was an Irishman, too, who called himself Arthur Wellesley, and what an amount of ingenuity was expended to show that his origin was a mistake, and that he was only Irish in so far that his birth was a bull!

Now, I am no Repealer—no Young-Ireland man—no Feenian—no Erin-go-braghite; but I am downright weary, heart-sick of that everlasting depreciation of Ireland which is the stock theme of newspapers. When the House is up, and nothing of interest before the public, why not take a turn at Scotland, or even the Isle of Man? I'm sure, for a diversion, one might be able to find out something ill to allege of the Channel Islands. I'll look up something against Sark myself before the autumn is over.

BE ALWAYS READY WITH THE PISTOL.

“BE always ready with the pistol,” were amongst the last, if not the very last, words of counsel spoken by Henry Grattan to his son; and if they be read aright, they are words of deep knowledge and wisdom, and not the expressions of malevolence or of passion.

No man of his age—very few men of any age—was ever more exempted by the happy accidents of his nature from reliance on mere force than Henry Grattan. He combined within his character almost every attribute that gives a man power over his fellows. With the vigour and energy of a lion he had an almost womanly gentleness. There was a charm in his manner, and a persuasiveness in his address, that the most prejudiced of his political enemies were the first to acknowledge. It was the temperament of an ancient Roman in all that regarded dignity,

unswerving purpose, and high devotion to country, blended with a far nobler and purer patriotism than ever Roman knew; and yet this man, armed with these great gifts, endowed with a superiority so unquestionable, had to own that there were not only occasions in life in which all individual supremacy must be merged that a man may measure himself with another vastly his inferior in intellect, but that it is a positive duty not to decline, but actually to welcome, the occasion that may prove how ready the ablest man is to accept the arbitrament of the most vulgar-minded.

When Dr Johnson stamped in a discussion because his adversary had done so, saying, "Sir, I will not concede to you the advantage of even a stamp!" he completely expressed this principle, and showed how essential it is that high intellect should not show itself deficient in whatever constitutes the strength of an inferior order of men.

In Grattan's day a duel was a common occurrence; almost every man in public life had fought more than once. Indeed, it was deemed a very doubtful sincerity that hesitated to stake life on the assertion of any line of action; and he who declined a provocation was as irretrievably ruined as if he had been convicted of forgery. In fact, it was almost in this light it was regarded. Courage being deemed so

essentially part of a gentleman's nature, the discovery that it was wanting implied that degree of falsehood and deception that amounted to dishonour.

Rude as this chivalry was, it reacted most favourably on manners ; the courtesy of debate was never violated by any of those coarse contradictions and unseemly denials which lower parliamentary habits. Men knew well that the questions which touched personal honour were to be settled in another place, and that he who transgressed the limits of a certain reserve did so with the full consciousness of all that might come of it.

It was rare, too, to find that anything like bitterness survived the "meeting." The quarrel once decided, men returned to the daily business of life without a particle of animosity towards each other. They had settled their difference, and there was an end of it. When Mr Corry was lying ill of his wound after his duel with Grattan, a friend came to sit with him one day, and after talking some time in the darkened room, let fall some remark reflecting on the conduct of the other's late antagonist,— "Hist !" cried Corry, "there's a little fellow asleep at the foot of the bed would send a ball through you if he heard that,"—the little fellow being Henry Grattan himself, who had never quitted the bedside

of the wounded man, and who had just dropped off asleep from over-fatigue and watching.

Now, to compass generosity like this was surely worth something; and I am by no means so certain that an equal degree of kind feeling would follow on one of our present-day altercations, when right honourable and honourable gentlemen are led to the interchange of courtesies more parliamentary than polite; nay, I am perfectly convinced that the good-fellowship of that time, confessedly greater than now, was mainly owing to the widely-spread respect for personal courage which pervaded public life.

I think I hear some one say, "This bloodthirsty Irishman wants to throw us all back into the barbarism that prevailed in the days before the Union;" but I want nothing of the kind. I think that, at the period referred to, the point of honour was too pedantically upheld; I think men resigned life on grounds totally unequal to such an appeal; I think there was an undue touchiness, an over-tensity, in the intercourse of the time, that was neither wholesome nor beneficial; but I will by no means concede that all the advantage is on our side, because we have decreed that a duel is a disgrace, and that the man who fights one is disqualified for everything.

Of the consequences that have followed on the severe penalties against duelling in the service, I own

frankly I cannot venture to speak, and for this reason I cannot trust my temper to speak calmly. The gross insults, the cruel wrongs, the insufferable outrages passed on men who, to resent them, must have accepted their own irretrievable ruin, are themes I dare not permit myself to discuss. Neither will I suffer myself to say one word in disparagement of a system which honourable men are daily submitting to, with what heartburning and indignation Heaven alone could tell us ! but, writing as I do in these sketches fully as much with reference to a public opinion outside Great Britain as within her limits, I desire to say that this legislation of ours about duelling, and the whole tone of our public opinion on the subject, has severely damaged us in Continental estimation. In the first place, no foreigner can possibly understand an Englishman's unwillingness to "go out," except on grounds that would impeach personal courage, because no foreigner knows enough of our public feeling to comprehend the fatal injury inflicted on a man's career in England, by the repute of his having fought a duel. There is not a section in all the complex machinery of our society against which the delinquent does not hurl his defiance. As an eminent Irish judge, more remarkable for the bathos than the accuracy of his eloquence, once said, "The practice is inhuman, it is uncivilised, it is unchristian ; nay,

gentlemen of the jury, I will go further—it is illegal!”

And what man has the courage to face, not merely the chance of being shot, but the certainty of being stigmatised? I desire to declare here that I am not speaking vaguely or from hearsay. So far as a long residence amongst foreigners in nearly all parts of Europe enables a man to pronounce, I claim the right to declare that I know something about them; and I know of nothing that seems, through every separate people of the Continent, so universal as the belief that Englishmen do not like to “go out.”

If a Frenchman or an Italian accept a challenge to a duel, it is a sort of brevet of bravery; wounded or unwounded, he comes home from the field a hero. The newspapers record the achievement as something glorious, and his friends call to see him as a species of Paladin. If he can but drive out with his arm in a sling, his fortune is made; and his recognition in a café, his smile of bland and triumphant heroism, is a thing to be accepted with gratitude. Contrast this with the Englishman, hiding not alone from the law, but from public opinion; not merely dreading the Attorney-General, but far more fearing his aunt in Cheltenham, whose heir he was to have been, but who, being “a Christian woman,” will certainly have nothing to do with one who sought the blood of a

fellow-creature—albeit a fellow-creature who had inflicted the deepest wound on his honour.

Think of *him*, I say, neither backed by the press, nor sustained by his friends, but nursing his fractured femur in solitude, with the consciousness that he has ruined his fortune and done for his character—that all the moments he can spare from his poulitices must be passed in apologies to his friends, and reiterated assurances that he only accepted the issue of arms after an amount of provocation that almost brought on an apoplexy! And, last of all, imagine all the ridicule that awaits him—the pasquinades in the ‘Saturday,’ and the caricatures in ‘Punch;’ and while the noble Count, his antagonist, struts the “Bois” as a Bayard, *he* must skulk about like a felon that has escaped by a flaw in the indictment; a creature of whom the world must be cautious, as of a dog that was once mad, and that no one will guarantee against a return of hydrophobia!

They say no man would ever wish to be rescued from drowning if he only knew the tortures that awaited him from what is called the Humane Society. Indeed, the very description of them makes the guillotine or the garrotte seem in comparison like a mild anodyne; but is not this exactly the position of the unfortunate man in question? Be ready with the pistol indeed! Be ready to accept loss of station, loss

of respect, disinheritance, estrangement of friends, coldness of every one—not because you were quarrelsome or contentious—not because, being steady of hand and unerring of eye, you could venture to assume a tone that was likely to be resented—but simply because, with such French as they taught you at Rugby, you would not permit the Count Hippolyte de Coupegeorge to revile your nation and defame your countrywomen in an open café, but threatened to throw him and his shako into the street.

Turn for a moment from the individual to the nation, and see if this damaging conviction has not a great deal to do with the estimate of our country now formed by all foreigners. We have not, it is true, any enemy so grossly unjust as to deny courage to our nation; but there is a current belief fast settling into a conviction that we are not “ready with the pistol”—that we require more provocation, and endure more outrage, than any one else; and that it is always safe to assume that we will never fight if we can possibly help it.

The sarcasm of the First Napoleon, when he called us a nation of shopkeepers, had a far deeper and broader significance than a reference to our trading propensities. It went to imply, that in cultivating the spirit of gain, we had sacrificed the sentiment of glory; and that the lower ambition of money-getting

had usurped the place that should be occupied by a high and noble chivalry. It was a very good thing to teach Frenchmen this ; no better lesson could have been inculcated than a contempt for a people who had always beaten them. Still, as a mere measure of convenience, it is rather hard on us that we must be reduced to maintain our character for courage by far more daring feats, by bolder deeds and more enduring efforts, than are called for from any other people. The man who is ready with the pistol goes out on the first legitimate provocation, and, whether he shoots his man or is shot, the affair ends ; but he who declines and hesitates generally ends by such a disparagement of his courage, that he must fight some half-dozen times to set himself right with the world.

Why is France at the head of Europe ? Simply because she is ready with the pistol. War may be all that you like to say of it. The Quakers have done the vituperation so perfectly that I need not repeat it ; but there have always been wars, and there will always be wars in the world ; and a drab-coated broad-brimmed thee-and-thou planet would be as dreary and tasteless as a ball in a counting-house. So long as England was ready with the pistol, there was not a nation in Europe dared to insult her. The men who guided our destinies

through all the great wars of the First Empire were certainly not heaven-born statesmen in point of ability to devise, or eloquence to support, their measures—they were possibly very inferior to those who now sit on the Treasury benches. In the Liverpool Cabinet were no such really professional statesmen as we see in the present Ministry; and yet, compare the England of that day—one-eighth less in population, scarcely much more than half as rich, as at present—compare that England with this, and will all the boastful leaders of the ‘Times’ reconcile you to the difference? We were ready with the pistol in 1808; we were ready with it, also, after the rupture of the peace of Amiens; and ready enough in 1815, too, when we played for the heaviest stake we had ever ventured.

For myself, I’d rather have seen Napier’s fleet come back from the Baltic, shot-struck and disabled, with damaged rigging and smashed bulwarks, to tell that they had found the Russians tough customers—able to give as good as they took—than see them sail into the Downs without a spar injured or a block missing, and hear that the channels were intricate and the forts ugly, and that, all things considered, it was just as well to have nothing to do with them. Nelson found his way through more

tortuous windings, in that self-same sea, to find at the end very different batteries from those of Sweaborg or Bommersund ; but he was one of those who were "ready with the pistol."

I do not believe that the Nation at large is anything but what it always was. I am convinced that to-morrow we could count upon every great quality of noble heroism and daring that have given us our name in history.

But we want a little of that indiscipline of our fathers—that resistance to dictation, let it come from press or public—that haughty spirit which did not stop to count the cost when an insult was to be wiped out, and which, if it occasionally led us into embarrassments, ended by making our nation the freest and the foremost of Europe. Say what we may, we are not a military people, and the best proof of it is this—that we never can fight unless we are angry. I half wish that we were a little angry now, if only that one result should follow, and that we could show the world that the time is not gone by when we could be "ready with the pistol."

But one word more. I am not indifferent to—I am deeply grateful for—the improved tone of our civilisation, by which we have suppressed the fire-eater and put down the bully. I know of nothing

so creditable to our manners, as that tacit understanding amongst all gentlemen, that the ruffian is not to be tolerated who, on the strength of his skill with a pistol, presumes to lord it over society. I think that by this step alone we have established an indisputable right to declare that we have made some progress in civilisation.

I think, too, it is an immense gain to good breeding, and consequently to the enjoyment of all social intercourse, that, instead of, as formerly, merging all question of right and wrong in a hostile meeting, men are obliged nowadays to stand forth before the world, not alone to vindicate their characters for honour and honesty, but for good temper and forbearance.

We have got thus far in England, and I would only say, let us not imperil this immense boon by presuming too far on its benefits ; and, above all, let us not forget that this great change in manners has made but little progress beyond the limits of our own country, and is still as essentially English as our Habeas Corpus, our bitter beer, or our beef. Foreigners, let it be remembered, will neither understand nor give us credit for it. If there is anything in our ways and habits totally above their comprehension, it is our system—whether in political or social life—of dispensing with checks. That public opinion can

keep the peace in the street and in the *salon* is a hopeless riddle to them. And now I have done, I trust not to be misunderstood, and that they who have had the patience to follow me, will see when and why I deem a "man should be ready with the pistol."

THE UNLUCKY NUMBER.

THERE are certain “Shams”—I hate the word, for it is a pet one of the greatest of all shams—which the world is at last getting weary of. Diplomatic councils! The veriest tyro in the study of human nature must know the hopelessness of bringing men to discuss a subject of direct interest to themselves. Of the thirteen wise men who formed the late Conference, each had a distinct and separate object to attain. To take the principals: Denmark desired not to be dismembered; Prussia wished not only to dismember, but to absorb a large proportion of the fragments; Austria had assisted at the dismemberment only to show the rest of Germany that she was as patriotic as Prussia, and could be as brutal, as unjust, and as fond of pillage, as if she had been a Lutheran state; England endeavoured to keep the

peace, because in no possible eventuality could war give her anything except an increase to her debt ; while France, whose whole object has been for years past the spread of distrust through Europe, the rupture of the ties that once bound nations together, and more especially the complete isolation of England—France looked on delighted at the grand imbroglio, well knowing that the time of anarchy was coming, when she could seize on the spoils. Her “dignified reserve,” as the ‘*Moniteur*’ so beautifully styles it, reminds me of a scene I once witnessed in a Mississippi steamer. There was, as is usual, a large party engaged at play in the cabin—very high play—stimulated by strong passion and strong drink ; and a dispute arose as to the rightful winner of the pool. The discussion was very violent, the language used of the strongest, and intimations were exchanged that when once on shore the matter should be determined by an appeal to something besides words—when suddenly an immensely large man, so tall that he towered by a head above his fellows, arose, and, drawing himself up to his full height, cried out, “I’ll have none of this ! Here’s how it’s to be ;” and he struck the table with his fist a blow that made it resound. “Every gentleman in this cabin has his revolver and his bowie-knife : let us put out the lights, and see who’ll have the money !”

It is needless to say how quickly the proposal scattered the company.

Now, the Conference we have just witnessed did not end without results because the Danes were obstinate, or the Prussians inordinate in their demands, or the Austrians undecided whether to outrage England or the "Bund." The Conference was a failure simply because France would take no part in its deliberations. France was there to be the dignified spectator of an unruly discussion—the one calm, well-bred individual in a brawling company. While one screamed the "Schlei!" and another yelled the "Danneverk!" France only smiled blandly on each, gently hinting how honourable were all strong convictions, and how refreshing it was to witness such ardour in an age that had been reproached with its cold infidelity. She saw, in fact, that by simply waiting "the lights would be put out," and she knew who'd get the money.

The "power of the unknown number is incommensurable," was a maxim of the First Napoleon, and in the reserve—in the unexpressed determination—of the present Emperor, lies all his weight at this moment. The press of Germany assures him that the hour is coming in which he will destroy for ever the boasted maritime supremacy of England, and humble the Power that has so long been mistress of

the seas. The English papers assure him that he may have the Rhine for the asking ! and thus this accident of an accident, by our unstatesmanlike courses, by our want of foresight, and our utter forgetfulness of even late history, is now the master of Europe.

We have done for this man all that genius, which he has not, and all that craft, which he has, could possibly have done for him. We have broken up all the coalitions which years of common danger had cemented, and the friendships we had pledged when fighting side by side for the same cause ; we have made him great, not from any qualities of greatness in himself, but because we brought ourselves so low that we stand humbled before him.

All that the great Emperor could not do with his genius, the little Emperor has done by our folly. What the grandest conceptions and the greatest calculations failed to accomplish, we have brought about by the insensate stupidity of not believing that an insignificant intellect may become dominant in an age of mediocrity, and that there are eras in life in which the craft of a conspirator can take the place of the statesman. I am quite sure we ought never to have gone to war about Denmark. Her cause was not at any time one of that clear, palpable, unmistakable nature that justifies going to war for. It would have been like trying to settle a case in

equity by a duel! The Danish question was precisely one for a Chancery suit, and it might have followed the fortunes of one if it had not been that a very small Prussian, M. Bismarck, had got into his head the ambition of being a great Minister. To turn off the attention of the Radicals at home he got up the row abroad; and *we*, instead of aiding the Liberal party, as we might and ought to have done, by unmasking his roguery, and showing that the attack on Denmark was a mere fraud,—we actually took him at his word, and affected to believe him to be the advanced-guard of German Liberalism, the herald of that mighty spirit that comes out every fifty years or so, to sing, “Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?” Dumas tells us somewhere of a mayor in France that endowed his native town with a lake, but which, as it was only three inches deep at its deepest part, nobody would accept as a real piece of water, till one day, by some accident, a wild duck, a solitary bird of eccentric taste, actually descended and alighted on the pond; taking it, as he quaintly says, “au sérieux.” From that hour the mayor’s triumph was assured. Now Lord Russell performed the wild duck to M. Bismarck’s lake; and had he never gone paddling there, the water would have dried up long ago, and the stench of the swamp would have kept off all invaders.

Bismarck never believed in Schleswig-Holstein any more than the mayor believed in the water. It was that "Duck" of ours did it all. Why won't he keep to his own puddles, where he can do no mischief?

"I told you it was water," screams Bismarck; "and you see I was right. Look at Russell: he is come down to bathe in it." This was the beginning of the mess. The second stage was a speech—an extra-parliamentary utterance, as the 'Times,' with a superfoetation of bad phraseology, styles it. Now, whether it be some old remnant of the public school that survives in our statesmen or not, I cannot say, but certainly vacation always seems too much for them; and when the parliamentary "half" is over, they appear to take leave of their wits. It was at such a moment as this the Foreign Secretary told Russia she had forfeited her claim to Poland, and also informed Germany that on the day she attacked Denmark, she'd find somebody else in the Baltic that she didn't look for.

Now, this was all Bismarck wanted. To make Germany believe that his little war was a great national movement, was his real difficulty. To persuade the forty millions of beer-drinking dreamers that somebody had said something disrespectful of *sauer kraut* was not an easy task. No one in Europe troubles his head much about Germany in ordinary

times, and to imagine that they would get up a fervour about freedom, and lash themselves into an ecstasy on the subject of liberty, seemed as likely as that the hippopotamus in the Zoological Gardens should insist on being permitted to dance on the tight-rope.

The German devotion to liberty—this sudden uprising in favour of freedom—is somewhat droll; but Alphonse Karr says that “the liberty of the press is indescribably dear to that interesting portion of the population who can’t read;” so, possibly, it is the unknown that gives the charm to this German infatuation, as “distance lends enchantment to the view.”

At all events, they got up a white-heat patriotism. It glowed, it flared, and it sputtered all the more vigorously, perhaps, that France only smiled and said, “How picturesque!” When one of the minor theatres parodied the Italian drama, it was Paul Bedford performed the part of Medea. It is needless to say what a shock such a travesty gave to all who really enjoyed the great personation of Ristori. In exactly the same taste and spirit do we see the new piece, “The Regeneration of Germany,” announced—the part of Garibaldi by M. Bismarck.

Now to give an illustration. If the late Mr Palmer of Rugely, some days after his conviction, had

expressed a strong desire to be elected President of the Humane Society, would not the ambition have excited some question at least as to his motives? And in the name of all common sense, was not Bismarck just as notorious as Palmer? was there anything that the one had not done to extinguish life that the other had not tried to stifle liberty? Palmer laughed at and derided the tests employed to unmask him; so did Bismarck. Palmer made "his book" to win by putting his antagonist out of the way—so did Bismarck. I only wish I could carry my comparison farther. At all events, would it not have been possible to show the German people—I don't mean the narrow-minded Berlin folk, the smallest, meanest, most poor-spirited population I ever encountered, but the great kraut-eating, solid, and, in the main, right-hearted German nation—that this man Bismarck meant no good by them? He was like a man encouraging a mob to attack a smith's shop that he might obtain the handcuffs to put on his followers afterwards. By what freak of imagination could any one convert him who had defied the Parliament, and threatened to impose taxation by a royal edict, into an apostle of Liberty?

What were our Ministers and Envoys doing in Germany not to have shown our Foreign Office the danger that was impending, and the urgent necessity

there existed for promptly unmasking this man's designs, and showing the great German people that he could never be taken as the exponent of their wishes—the representative of their hopes?

It must be owned that the Whigs have a sort of knack of this kind of bungling. When Daniel O'Connell had stamped himself as a rebel, the Whig Government of the day whitewashed him into a patriot; and now that Bismarck has outraged the Chamber, and denounced the Constitution, our Ministers have stepped in with a bill of indemnity, and agreed to regard him as the incarnate soul of an awakened Germany. And as if this was not enough, they have, by holding out false hopes to Denmark, encouraged a resistance, to overcome which, has converted Bismarck into a hero!

When the history of our time shall be written, it will puzzle posterity to account for the amount of influence wielded in it by men so palpably third-rate in ability, nor will the riddle be explained without adverting to the calibre of those who opposed them. Then will it be seen how small was the stature that ranked as a giant amongst pigmies.

Still, no great cleverness was needed either to detect this fraud or unmask it; and I would ask, What were our envoys doing in Germany? Why did they not neutralise this man's influence? Why

not expose the rotten treachery by which he was entrapping the nation into a war whose only issue must be its own subjugation? And why did our Foreign Office accept him in the character of a liberator?

The simple truth is, we were out-manceuvred and jockeyed. We wanted to bully the Diet, and called in the assistance of Prussia; but "the man in blue" was not a policeman, as we believed, but the chief of the gang, and the very first to rob the premises.

Having told the Danes that they should not be left to themselves, it was somewhat difficult to get out of our scrape when the time of trial approached. We did this, however, ingeniously. We made proposals to them, as the price of our friendship, so humiliating that we deemed them impossible of acceptance. They disappointed us; they agreed to everything. The Allies, however, seeing that Denmark was to be disposed of by auction, outbid us, and we gave up the lot that had been actually knocked down to us.

We then called for a Conference. The word Congress was not palatable; and as modest people put "tea" on their cards when they mean an evening party, we only said Conference, not Congress.

Let any one imagine thirteen men, quibblers by profession, and obstructive through the force of habit, met together to agree on a question where each had

a strong interest in differing from all the rest, and where any possible plan could never have the approval of more than the man who proposed it. Let him figure to his mind thirteen nationalities stimulated by all their characteristic prejudices, and goaded on by the language, more or less inflammatory, of their respective newspapers, and say whether these deliberations were likely to lead to peace.

Through the fragments that have reached us we can form some notion of the task of him whose doings most nearly concern us—our Foreign Secretary; and certainly no man ever seemed more inexhaustible in resources of which nobody cared to avail himself. Whatever he proposed was immediately scouted. He recommended a line of demarcation, neither side would hear of it; he suggested another, they got sulky and refused it; he counselled an arbitration, and named the arbiter, and immediately the company got up and walked home.

Now, while all this was going on—and remember, it was not our quarrel at all; we had only lent our front parlour to the gentlemen who were to settle it—we were made the mark for all the abuse and vituperation of Europe. For a while, indeed, it startled us to be called braggarts and bullies, faithless allies and treacherous friends; but we got accustomed to even worse, and grew to see ourselves written

down cowards in that guttural language whose most endearing word sounds like an imprecation.

If we burned and destroyed every old rotten Prussian town in the Baltic to-morrow—no very great achievement—it would no more repay us for all the insolence that we have put up with, than does the infliction of a forty-shilling fine on the cabman recompense the gentleman whom he has blackguarded for an hour in a crowded thoroughfare.

The Germans are not bad people, but they are "*grob*," which is something more than rude, something compounded of insolence and stupidity. The fraction of right they had in this quarrel excited their imaginations; their success in arms, like all unaccustomed sensations, turned their heads completely, for though Döppel was on a hill, it was so unlike Jena!

We fared badly in the negotiations, and came ill out of the Conference. We are insulted, outraged, and reviled from one end of the Continent to the other. We are told that our influence is ended in Europe, and that the sooner we recognise our position as a fourth-rate Power the happier will it be for us. Our fair-spoken ally, France, too, who has had good words for everybody—pity for the Danes and praise for the Prussians—tells us that in our aquatic capacity we may make some noise, but as a terrestrial

people we are nothing, and that in our "little war," if we make one, nobody need be inconvenienced ; and yet with all this—not very pleasant to bear—I agree, provided we do not go to war with Germany, and thus offer our open flank to the assault of an ally far more dangerous than all our enemies. The Germans will one day get over their indigestion. Much ought to be forgiven to the eaters of *sauer kraut*. They will recover, not their good manners, for they have lost none, but their good-humour, which they once had ; they will see that they have been cheated by their own leaders, and will make a sort of *amende* to us in some stupid way of their own. But the French will hate as they have always hated us ; and their Emperor, if the hour comes that he can slip his bloodhounds against us, will attach to his name and his dynasty a loyalty that all the conquests of the Continent would never bring him.

If the fight is to come, let it be a fair one ; let us not come into the ring with an arm tied ; and for this reason I say, No war with Germany, nor any Continental war in which France has not pronounced the side she takes.

Above all, no little wars ; and the best way to avoid them is, no Conferences. I know something of the sort of people who assemble at these councils ; and I declare solemnly, I do not think there is a

question in religion, ethics, or even art, that thirteen diplomatists could discuss without thirteen separate and divergent opinions.

Their profession, if we may dignify their calling by the name, teaches little beyond hair-splitting; and the highest ambition of any is, to connect his name with some treaty or some convention that may hand him down, in connection with another like himself, to a posterity that in all likelihood will be grateful to neither of them. Imagine thirteen doctors consulting over a patient, of whom a large majority would rather that the sick man should die, and you have some idea of the late Conference at London.

THE MAN VERSUS HIS WORK.

THERE is a question I wish some one would resolve for me, for though I have an opinion upon it myself; I am by no means sure it is a correct one; and indeed the matter has so many aspects, it is not easy to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

The question is this: Are men generally greater or less than their works? That is to say, is the speech, or the lecture, or the poem, or the picture, better than or inferior to the man that made it? It is a somewhat large field for speculation, and probably would demand from us a greater insight into the natures and characters of distinguished men than is easily attainable. It is, moreover, one of those questions on which any great sweeping judgment would in all likelihood be incorrect.

There have been men of such versatile genius—so many-sided, as the Germans say—that it would be

difficult to say they were not greater than their works; not alone because their great intellects could adapt themselves to labours so various and dissimilar, but because it would not be easy to pronounce in what especial pursuit the individual had found his truest field and his most congenial work. Michael Angelo was one of these.

My own opinion is this, the man is always, or almost always, inferior to the thing he produces; and in this instance, as in countless others, the part is better than the whole. I am, of course, here speaking solely of representative men—the great signs of the human equation. As for Jones and Brown & Co., I reserve them for another occasion.

The varying ratio of the difference between the man and his work will be measured by the character and peculiarity of the work itself.

Thus a man's greatest battle, his grandest speech in the House, his epic, or his essay, may possibly be only in a slight degree above the normal stature of the man himself; whereas, if he be a painter, his great picture is sure to overtop him considerably; and if a musician, his grand opera will reduce him to the mere proportions of a dwarf; and this, remember, not because music is a higher development of the intellectual faculty than war, statecraft, or

poetry ; but because of all created bipeds there is nothing so mentally small as a composer !

Mendelssohn alone of all our present-day men had genius : as for the others, there is not one of them whose worst ballad is not better than he who wrote it. They are the shallowest thinkers, the worst informed on matters of general interest, and the poorest conversationalists the world produces. They are as circumscribed as the actor, and they have not that humoristic tendency which gives to the actor all the emphasis of his character.

Next in order to musicians come hairdressers—great, indeed, as artists, poor as humanities. It would not be fair, perhaps, to expect a man to rise to the level of the wig ; for what assumption of virtue or magnanimity could vie in counterfeit with that wave-like fall over the ears, that curl of more than child-like innocence on the forehead ? I can imagine Mr Truefit a charming companion, brilliant, suggestive, and versatile ; but it would be hard to persuade me that he was greater than “her ladyship’s front ;” or that, like his prototype, the red man, he was not grander in his “scalps” than in himself.

To come back, however, from special instances to my original proposition ; for if I walk farther in this track, I might grow personal. I opine, then, the

work will be found almost universally greater than the man.

In other words, that the individual in any great creation has, through the excitement of his labour, so worked upon his faculties that they have accomplished results far beyond their normal exercise, and in this way transcended the man himself. Hence was it Petrarch shed tears as he read over his sonnets—tears, certainly, not shed for Laura; and Cervantes laughed till he cried over the drolleries of Sancho Panza. And if Shakespeare withstood Falstaff, he was something more or less than human. I have heard, and I like to believe it, that Dugald Dalgetty was intensely relished by Scott years after he had written him.

Over and over again in the Lives of Painters do we find them in amazement at some of their own earlier efforts; and Fuseli cried out on seeing one of his own without recognising it, "What a genius that fellow had!"

These are the traits, too, which Brown & Co. fix on to establish their pet accusation of vanity against clever men; and indeed I would wish at this moment to protest against being classed with these critics, since it is not by disparaging the man that I seek to establish my position, but by elevating the work. Now what is the true state of the case? It

is no use beating about the bush, taking a bygone example, or indicating a live one by asterisks. Let me instance myself; I can afford to say it without any risk of being called vain. I have seen a great deal of life, not alone in the great world and the little world, but in that intermediate world which is bigger than them both. I am variously accomplished, and remarkably gifted. Don't be disgusted, sagacious reader; I must say these things—they are part of my brief; and if I do not put them forward, you certainly will not do so for me; but if I am anything "great," it is as a conversationalist. Competent judges from all parts of the world have declared that, though I may have an equal somewhere in Japan, perhaps, or Bokhara, I have no superior.

Not a monologist like Macaulay, nor an overbearing opinionist like Croker, nor a flippant epigrammatist like Thiers, my skill was pre-eminently employed in eliciting whatever latent stores of agreeability I could detect around me. Not merely a talker myself, I made talkers of others. No rock so dull that I could not elicit a spark from it; no table-land so barren that I could not find a wild-flower in its desolation. Well, it so chanced that t'other day one of those creatures who presume on the fact of being an old schoolfellow to maintain an acquaintanceship, dormant for half a lifetime—as if

there could be any bond of friendship cemented by having been flogged by the same cane—came through the neighbourhood where I have pitched my tent for the summer, and installed himself as my guest for a day. He was a loutish, heavy-headed dog as a boy, and years had not made any better of him. He was as wearisome at forty as I remember him at fourteen, with this addition, that he had gathered as he went on in life a quantity of commonplace observation which he fancied to be wisdom, and a stock of the very dreariest stories that he thought wit. I had to endure this wretched incubus for twelve mortal hours, and to endeavour to what is called entertain him. I did my utmost; I took him through politics, and gave him a canter from Circassia to Schleswig-Holstein, with diversions into Poland and North America. I tried him with Colenso and the Dean of Westminster, dashed with Dr Darwin and spiced with Du Chaillu. I went into early Christian art, railroad shares, the grape disease, Garibaldi, the Irish famine, and the state of the Funds. I gave him a haunch of Alpine mutton Wales could not rival, and a bottle of such “chambertin” as the First Napoleon drank after a victory. I prolonged the evening in an arbour over the lake, with a view at our feet Claude never approached in his best moments, with the perfection of Mocha and

an unparalleled cigar ; and after a long pause, in which, by the aid of maraschino, I was endeavouring to recruit exhausted nature, the creature said, " By the way, I gave Scroggins of the Three hundred and fifth a letter to you ; you were at Paris at the time."

" Perhaps so ; I do not remember. I have forgotten him."

" Well, he has not forgotten *you*."

At this remark I rallied. I brightened up—I felt as one, after days of lying becalmed, as the first air of wind raises the drooping ensign at the peak, and wafts it lazily to the breeze. I thought, at all events, Scroggins was better than his friend. I at least had made some impression on *him*.

" Scroggins," continued he, " is a clever fellow ; he was on Sir Hugh Badstock's staff in India twelve years ago, at Rangoon, and knows a deal of life."

I gave a ready assent to this under the guarantee already received, that Scroggins had preserved a full memory of *me*.

" When he was going abroad," continued he, " he came down to my place in Surrey. ' Don't you know O'Dowd ? ' said he. ' Intimately ; we were in the same class at school. ' Give me a letter to him, ' said he, ' for I shall stop some time in Paris, and I hear so much of him, I'd like to see him. ' "

At this I smiled blandly once more, and nodded that he should go on ; but instead of doing so, he only filled his glass, and tasted it, and then sat silent.

“ Well,” said I—“ well ?”

“ I suppose,” said he, after another pause, “ that you may have been ill, or out of sorts—probably hard up. I hear you often are hard up.”

“ And why do you infer any of these ?” asked I, a little uneasily.

“ Well, I thought so, because Scroggins said when he came back that he was never so disappointed in all his life ; you were not a bit what he expected ; you never said a funny thing the whole time he was there—told no good story, and did not even once make him laugh. ‘ In fact,’ said he, ‘ Watkins of ours is worth a score of that fellow, and sings nigger-melodies and dances the “ Perfect Cure ” till you’d split your sides looking at him.’ ”

“ Did you ever hear what the footman said to Oliver Goldsmith in the kitchen ?”

“ No.”

“ You’re a wit, they say ; let us see if you can swallow a poker !”

“ And what did Goldsmith say ?” asked my ancient friend and schoolfellow.

“ History recordeth not ; but I believe I could tell you what he felt.”

As he sipped his wine in silence, I remembered an anecdote of a fellow-sufferer, and my memory helped me to some consolation. It was during one of Charles Kean's visits to the United States. He was entertained at dinner by one of the great New York merchants. Opposite to him at the table there sat a gentleman, who continued to observe him with marked attention, and at last called on the host to present him to Mr Kean. The introduction was duly made, and ratified by drinking wine together, when the stranger, with much impressiveness of manner, said, "I saw you in Richard last night."

Kean, feeling, not unnaturally, that a compliment was approaching, smiled blandly and bowed.

"Yes, sir," continued the other, in a slow, almost judicial tone; "I have seen your father in Richard; and I saw the last Mr Cooke"—another pause, in which Charles Kean's triumph was gradually mounting higher and higher. "Yes, sir! Cooke, sir, was better than your father; and your father, sir, a long way better than *you*!"

Now, of course, these things, or something like them, happen every day. If we have not a slave in our chariot, we have a schoolfellow; and I have mentioned this fact to show that I am well aware that though this order of men is a large class, I by no means accept the honour of being brigaded amongst

them; and, as I have already declared, I do not desire to bring down the man, but to elevate the thing he has created.

The Cockney who knocks with his knuckles at the great bell of Moscow and pronounces its tone to be poor, is a fair representative of the creatures who impose themselves on men of distinction out of a mere vulgar curiosity, and then go away, disparaging that greatness of which their nature could give them no measure. Besides this, the small fry who hunt celebrities want something applicable to themselves and their own small ways and small habits. They want him to give something to record; to shoot a bird that they may carry home.

It is thus that the world gets crammed with twaddling stories about this or that great General or Minister being singularly heavy in society, taking little part in the conversation, and never by an observation or a remark rising above the veriest commonplace. It is wonderful how even clever men, when little conversant with society, will fall into this mistake. Jeffrey, with all his acuteness, is an instance. He mentions his having met Talleyrand at dinner, and being seated next him. The occasion was a proud one, and he hoped to carry away from it some memories that would not die; but the only remark the great Minister made him was, "Apropos de votre

célèbre potage de cock-a-leekie, Mon. Jeffrey, faut-il le manger avec des prunes ou sans prunes ?” Now, had the clever Scotsman been as subtle as a man of society as he was as a lawyer, the question, instead of deterring him by its frivolity, would have opened one of the pleasantest themes that can be discussed at table. Did he want the Treaty of Amiens, the death of the Duc d’Enghien, or the restoration of the Bourbons ? You will see, sagacious reader, that I do not seek recruits to my opinion about the superiority of the work to the man amongst those who go about recording their bitter disappointments with clever people.

The greatest men—that is, the men who deal with the greatest questions—are seldom good talkers. The indiscretion so essential to good talk would be fatal to them. Louis Philippe, indeed, would tell you everything—the last interview he had with Guizot, and the contents of the despatch he had sent off to Soult ; but then he had this greatest security—nobody believed a word of it. To my theme, however. The man will never be equal to his best work, for this reason, that he will never be able to present such a force of concentration in himself, as in that to which, for a given time at least, he gave all his energy and all his will. What a poor creature have I seen a great chess-player—by what a “Cretin” have

I been electrified at the piano ! What a dotard have I overlooked at the whist-table, displaying traits of veritable genius in the game !

The small folk in art, letters, politics, or the drama may be, I grant, greater than their works. It is not according them any overwhelming praise, and they are welcome to it. There is, indeed, a sort of agreeability that seems to depend on a man's failure in his especial career ; and we all of us can call to mind pleasant painters who daubed abominably, and actors who could be delightful in society, though they were always "damned" on the stage. As for the briefless barrister, he has ever been a charming companion ; and I am credibly informed that there are great authorities on the bench who look regretfully back to the time when they went circuit only for change of air. To say that some one portion of a man's life is greater than the whole of it, is not a very startling proposition. Take, for instance, Sydney Smith's defence of Acre ; take Wolfe's night-attack on Quebec ; Desaix's charge at Marengo ; or take such an action as we saw t'other day, when that American—he is now a Confederate captain—went through the midst of the fight on the Peiho, to the ship of Admiral Hope, rowed in an open boat, through shot and shell and crashing musketry, to offer any succour in his power to the wounded. Tuffnel, I think—I hope

I am right—was his name. I say it will be a rare chance if his whole life be up to the level of that noble achievement.

It will be the same in matters of intellectual effort. There will be moments, hours, even days, when some great minds—who knows how nourished, how stimulated, how prompted?—will accomplish what no effort of mere will could ever have effected; and at such times as these the work will be greater than the man. It would seem that there is something uncontrollable at certain periods in human intellect—something that, revolting against all discipline and all restraint, confers a power on the mind's operations which is never the accompaniment of its normal labours; and in this way it resembles the strength of the man in insanity, which, without any real accession of increased force, appears to be doubled. These are the seasons in which men work out those conceptions which, after the lapse of years, they come to look on with wonder and astonishment.

“Ah! I could draw in those days,” said Vandyck, when, in his advanced manhood, he saw his first sketch of the picture of ‘St Martin parting his Cloak.’ The Single-speech Hamiltons are a class. There are a large number of men of one book, one picture, one poem. There are even men of one joke; and I’ll be bound, in such a case, that the

joke was as good, if not better, than the man who made it.

Now, if men be inferior to their works, I think the reverse is the case with women. They are invariably better than anything they paint, or write, or model, or compose ; and one reason is, they have less power of concentration than men—less of that faculty that enables the individual, while directing all his energies to one effort, to invest that effort with something totally extraneous to, and occasionally superior to, the individual who effected it.

Women, too, I suspect, work with far less strain on their faculties than men ; and part of that natural easy tone, so fascinating in their writing, is a result of this. Still, it has the effect of all steaming at half power, the pace is comparatively slow.

If I wanted an instance of the woman superior to anything she had produced, I would quote my distinguished countrywoman, Miss Edgeworth. Now, some of her shorter tales are admirable ; in the painting of certain traits of the Irish character, I do not know her equal. She understood that strange nature with all its varying shades, and its characteristics, at times so opposite and antagonistic, with a nicety of appreciation that none have ever surpassed ; and yet how immeasurably above all she wrote was she herself—how superior her conversation to the best dia-

logue of her books—and how infinitely more gentle, more tender, more womanly, in fact, was she than the sweetest heroine she ever drew!

I forbear to quote some others whose names occur to me at this moment, because I have already erred in letting the question lapse into the individual.

THE MODERN CRICHTONS.

THE present is unquestionably a moment of national humiliation. We have come exceedingly ill out of Schleswig-Holstein. We are very small on the continent of Europe, and are not, certainly, cutting a distinguished figure in our wars with the savages either in Africa or New Zealand. The noble Premier who guides our fortunes has, indeed, informed us that the Budget is satisfactory and the harvest promising, both being events which redound to the wisdom of the Cabinet; but somehow we have for some years got so much accustomed to hear these gratifying facts, and yet never to recognise that they either manifested themselves in light taxation or cheap bread, that we listen to them with a moderated joy, and without any unbecoming exuberance.

I suppose I must have fallen into a depressing, dispirited vein, for I looked around me in vain to

catch anything which should speak to me cheerily and comfortingly. All was "out of joint." The Church was squabbling; the laity had bullied them out of an opinion; and when they gave it, every one abused them for having declared it. We are angry with our dear ally France because she wouldn't fight Germany for us, and she so fond of fighting too. We are not quite pleased with our Colonies either. We want them—and very naturally—to be loyal and staunch to the mother country—to aid us at a pinch, if need be, but at the same time to be thoroughly self-supporting, and never cost us a sixpence. "Ah!" said the old Irish countess, "there's nothing I like better than oysters; I'd have a supper of them every night if the servants would eat the shells."

While I thus ran over one after another of our grievances—a list that extended from the coast of Assam to the harbour of Galway—I couldn't help asking myself, Have we anything, have we anybody, to be proud of at this moment?—is there a feature of our time that we assume to regard as satisfactory?—when I suddenly bethought me that we have a class probably more nearly approaching perfection than any country was ever endowed with,—men who not alone unite in their characters all the traits which distinguish greatness, but combine within their intellects acquirements the most varied and dissimilar. I

do not desire to try your patience. The Admirable Crichtons I mean are the Lawyers! Law itself is a large study. The vast wisdom which ages have accumulated and recorded must ever present a great field for human labour; but what is law to the multi-form knowledge of these marvellous men? You imagine that their nights are given to the deep research of their text-books, and that their heads are crammed full of cases, and writs in error, and arguments in chamber, and so on. Not a bit of it. Law is the least of their accomplishments. In fact, they would seem to practise law as a shopkeeper I knew in Limerick kept a cloth-shop, "only for the convenience of small change." It is over science, art, and literature—the fine arts, the drama, patent inventions, casualties at sea, and death by mysterious agency—that they roam, as a wild bee floats over a garden.

Take a case of fouling in the Channel, where the *Mary Jane* of Swansea, being on the starboard tack, was run into by the *Dashing Hero* of Cardiff, lost her bowsprit, was damaged in her bulwarks, and so severely injured below the water-line that she narrowly escaped foundering off the Nore, and indeed only gained Margate to go down in four fathoms water. Spinks was for the *Mary Jane*; Adams represented—I was going to say commanded—the *Dashing Hero*. Spinks opened beautifully with an account,

statistically given, of where the Mary Jane was built, and the admiration that accompanied her on the morning she descended into what newspapers call "her native element." He then grew warmer; he described the joy of Swansea, and the delight of her owners. She was a model craft—"swanlike and graceful, and chartered by the house of Rigs and Rags with coal for the works at Millwall." Once at sea—"the blue, the open sea"—he became Fenimore Cooper, and told how she furrowed the white waves, cleaving her proud way through the crested water, her gallant crew, sons of that land "whose home," by some incongruity, "is on the deep," and at the main the flag that for a thousand years, &c. &c.

In the Pool, however, came disaster, and Captain Spinks had now to be professional. Poetry had done its work, and navigation must be called in. "We were, my lord, on our starboard tack; the wind was east-east and by south—a fresh breeze, and threatening to be fresher. We were under a reefed topsail and trysail, with a storm jib and our mainsail doubly reefed. Your lordship will perceive from this that we had taken every possible precaution, even to the battening down our fore hatch."

"What of the main?" interrupted Adams. "Tell the court, I beg, how was the main hatchway."

"Brother Adams, I desire I may not be interrupt-

ed. I appeal to his lordship, is the course now adopted by my learned friend usual, regular, or professional? I deny that it is either. I go farther, and declare it to be unseamanlike."

The rebuke was heavy, and Adams went below. But why should I go on?—the report is in the 'Times,' and under the head of "Admiralty Court—Collision—Scuttles, owner, *versus* Scales and Others," you may read how the gallant Adams handled the Dashing Hero, showing by every rule of the Trinity House that, if he had not run into the lubberly collier—it was an unfeeling expression—he would have been "unworthy of his certificate—unworthy of the confidence of his owners."

"My lord, my learned friend has told you of the wind, but he has omitted to tell you of the tide."

"A half ebb," from Spinks, looking at his brief.

"Yes, my lord, a half ebb; and what is a half ebb in the Pool, with the wind strong from the southward?"

"East-east and by south," breaks in Spinks.

"Away with these flimsy subtleties, brother Spinks. No man ever walked a deck with more credit than yourself; but these crafty devices are not seamanship. When we saw, my lord, that the Mary Jane was determined to hold on her course, reckless as it was—when by repeated signals——"

“What were your signals?”

“What were our signals! does my gallant brother require at this time of day to be told what is meant by loosening off the foresail of a schooner on the port tack, with her helm hard up?”

The scene grew warm—almost a battle; and when a grand peroration closed Adams’s speech about the naval supremacy of Britain, and the rights of Englishmen to do at sea what nobody has ever dared to attempt on land, the genius of the place responded to the appeal, and three lusty cheers shook the court-house.

Now, when one remembers that either of these intrepid mariners would have been sea-sick in a ferry-boat, it must be owned that the exhibition was creditable. It was thoroughly histrionic too; they imparted to the whole discussion a certain bold and dashing character, an air of reckless attack and daring rejoinder, that savoured of a naval action; and when Adams, in his last appeal to the jury, “hitched” his small-clothes, there ran a murmur of approval through the court, in testimony of one who had thoroughly invested himself with his client’s interests.

They are finer still, however, in a patent case—a new treddle, the application of a lately-discovered salt as a dye for cotton prints, or a new apparatus

for condensing steam, or enamelling the skin, or strengthening the knee-timbers of iron-clads. The grandest achievement of all is a poisoning case—something that is to be two-thirds emotional and one-third scientific—where the interest vacillates between the most powerful passions and the pangs of arsenic, and the listener is alternately carried from the domestic hearth to the laboratory and back again.

Now, when one is aware that the “learned Serjeant” knows as much about chemistry as a washer-woman does of the “wave theory,” the display of impromptu learning he makes is positively astounding. Armed with an hour’s reading of Beck and Orfila, the great man comes down to court to puzzle, bewilder, and very often confute men of real ability and acquirement; to hold them up to the world as hopelessly ignorant of all that they had devoted their lives to master; and in some cases to exhibit the very science they profess as a mass of crude disjointed facts, from which no inference could be drawn, or a safe conclusion derived.

“Listen to these doctors, gentlemen of the jury; I hope you understand them. I vow to heaven that I do not; and which of them will you believe? Are you for the gentleman who relies on the ‘garlic odour,’ the beautiful pale-blue colour, or that still

more scientific performer who insists on a specific gravity of 999; and will any one tell me that the life of a fellow-creature is to hang on subtleties on which the creators themselves are not agreed? In the name of all humanity I ask, what is this science by whose decision we are to send a man to the scaffold? Dr Peebles tells you that the odour of garlic is a decisive evidence of arsenic. Heaven help the whole Spanish Peninsula! Gentlemen, in this case the indictment must take in all from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar. Professor Meryweather says blueness, and the last witness declares lightness, to be the infallible witness; and I have no doubt I could put on that table two others just as learned, and who would pronounce that the tests should be a yellow colour, and a greater specific gravity. For, remember, these sciences are in their infancy. The affinities that are to-day believed eternal, to-morrow discovers to be a mere accident. If there be a little salt of this, or muriate of that, or an oxide of the other, the colour blue would be red, and the garlic odour become like violets. How is the business of life to go on in the midst of such refined subtleties as these? Who would have the courage to ask his friend to dinner, when, should the common fate of mortality soon befall him, a question would arise as to what he had eaten on that day, what remarks he had

passed on the fish, and what judgment on the sherry? the whole to be closed up with a medical opinion about a garlic odour and a blue tint. ‘Give me three lines of a man’s writing, and I’ll draw an indictment that will hang him,’ was the terrible threat of an old criminal lawyer; but this is worse. Show me the crust or the biscuit your friend offered you, a fragment of the rusk or the cheese you had at luncheon, and I have an analytic professor who will vouch to discover in it either arsenic, corrosive sublimate, or sugar-of-lead.”

A pitiable spectacle indeed is that poor man of science, pilloried up in the witness-box and pelted by the flippant ignorance of his examiner! What a contrast between the diffident caution of true knowledge and the bold assurance, the chuckling confidence, the vainglorious self-satisfaction, and mock triumphant delight of his questioner! Mark the practised leer, the Old-Bailey grin, with which he comments on something that science still regards as uncertain or obscure, and hear him declare to the jury, that in the present state of medical knowledge there is not a man in court might not be indicted for having handed the salt or the mustard to his neighbour!

Occasionally—very rarely, it must be owned—the witness is, besides being a man of science, a man

of the world—one who joins to the requirements of the *savant* all the quick and ready-witted tact of society. I remember such a case. The barrister was no common man ; he was highly and variously gifted ; had a keen wit and a commanding eloquence. It was his task, on the occasion I refer to, to obtain from the medical witness the admission that the substance to which the poisoning was attributed was one freely used in practice, often prescribed by the best physicians, and occasionally in doses that verged on being excessive.

“Now, Doctor A.,” said he, “you have told us that strychnine is to be found in the Pharmacopœia, an admission that goes to show that the Faculty are not afraid, to use the vulgar illustration, to play with edge-tools. You have also said that you have administered it in your own practice. Will you be kind enough to inform us in what doses ?”

“The dose would be determined by the nature of the illness, the object sought to be obtained, and the peculiar circumstances of the individual patient.”

“Come, come, doctor, I am not trying to poach on you for an unfee’d opinion. I want generalities. Would you give a grain of this medicine ?”

“I might. I would rather give an eighth, or a sixth, or a fourth of a grain.”

“But you have actually given as much as a grain ?”

"I believe I have."

"Now, would you give two, or are there cases in which you would give three grains? For instance, would you venture to administer three grains to one of the gentlemen of the jury?"

"I opine not."

"Might there not be a case in which you would give his lordship yonder as much as three grains?"

"I should say not; certainly not."

"Would you give *me* three grains?"

At this the doctor seemed slightly confused, and unwilling to reply, and the lawyer, accepting the hesitation as confusion from being puzzled, followed up his supposed advantage by repeating his question.

"I am doubtful on the point. It is possible that I might," was the reply, after a long pause.

"Good heavens, sir! what do you mean? You have told us that under no circumstances would you administer as much as three grains to one of the gentlemen of the jury, nor to his lordship on the bench, and yet you now avow that you are actually uncertain whether you would not give this dose to *me*? Explain this, sir, if you can."

"The action of strychnine is but imperfectly known," said the doctor, with great composure. "It would be a valuable contribution to medical science

to determine it ; and we have a maxim in chemistry that says, 'Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.' That's my meaning."

In this case it was not the lawyer who triumphed.

The most offensive of all, however, is the display of legal drollery—the wit that sets the jury in a roar, and shakes the gallery with laughter. Excepting House of Commons drollery, there is nothing on earth so pitiably contemptible as legal fun. In bad taste, too, it totally eclipses the "House," for the senator is usually satisfied with a dreary bit of Joe Miller in some supposed "apropos" to what he is saying ; while counsel is sure to cut his joke on something personal to the witness—his dress, his accent, his whiskers, or his boots, well knowing the while that all reply is denied to the man he assails, and that in his coward immunity he may pelt him in perfect security.

And yet there is an offence worse than this—the practice of abashing a witness, especially a female witness, by something which, in shocking her delicacy, may seem to impugn her truthfulness. A late and flagrant instance of this occurred where a young lady, suffering under a most ruffianly assault on a roadside, was subjected by the prisoner's counsel to the most shameless and insulting cross-examination, to lead to the conclusion that she was, at one period

at least, not totally averse to the advances of her aggressor. When rebuked by the court for his line of defence, counsel flippantly replied, "My lord, I must do my best for my client." What sort of professional training can it be that will make a gentleman descend to such a depth as this !

Of a truth, it requires all the gifts and graces of these accomplished men to counterbalance such little blemishes ; nor am I quite sure that in extending to any class in the community the privilege of protection, while scattering insinuations broadcast, and pushing insults home, we may not be buying too dearly even our Admirable Crichtons.

“THE CHEAP ARTICLE WARRANTED,” ETC.

WHEN the history of our time shall be written, it would not be easy to find a more significant title to it than “The Age of the Cheap Article.” It is certainly the great characteristic of our day. Something that is to look like something else, seem as good, last as long, and only cost one-tenth of the price, is the grand desideratum on every hand ; and consequently our newspapers are filled and our walls covered with advertisements of nickel that looks like silver, “Gladstone” that drinks like claret, cheap tea, cheap furniture, Sydenham trousers, and the two-guinea “portmanteau, which contains everything necessary to a gentleman’s full wardrobe for a three weeks’ tour on the Continent.”

It seems at first strange that this intense rage for cheapness should be essentially English. You do, of course, meet some of it in Paris, but in no other city

of the Continent are the papers filled and the walls placarded with announcements of this or that substitute for something whose cost excludes it from common use. The reason, however, is this, that there is not, from one end of Europe to the other, so unreal a people as the English! I know with what an outcry of disbelief this assertion will be met. I know well how we regard the wretched foreigner, sneering at his frivolity, his capricious ways, his poor, weak, purposeless existence, and the rest of it. I know all our national contempt for the man of *eau sucré* and dominoes, and I am not going to gainsay one word of it. I only reassert that for unreality, for a pretension to seem something that he is not—for, in fact, an outrageous affectation—John Bull has not his equal in Europe. The reason is simple enough. Every man in England knows and feels that his acceptance in society depends on the class in which he is supposed to move, and as class distinctions with us are meted out by money, it behoves every one to appear better off than he is. To do this requires no small share of skill or address, because it has to be done in the midst of thousands all trying the same game. To live in a fashionable quarter, or sufficiently near one to steal the name of a neighbouring square to indicate your whereabouts, is a first necessity. To live with a certain outward

semblance of fortune is the second ; to give dinners and entertainments comes next ; to figure in subscription lists, stand forward in works of benevolence, all follow. Now, as it is essential that you should do all these things on the scale of a man of ten times your means, you can only accomplish the feat by employing substitutes ; that is to say, all around and about you must be a mockery—your house a four-storeyed delusion, your butler a ruined greengrocer, your bordeaux a full-flavoured Chancellor of the Exchequer, and your clothes the cheap product of the last Manchester discovery in devil's dust and glue.

Will you tell me that the man who lives in this charmed circle of everlasting lies, in a mock house with a mock household, a mock dinner, and an enamelled wife with a mock diamond necklace, can come out real and true ? Will you ask me to believe that he who breathes an atmosphere of falsehood all his days, can preserve throughout it his own pure unsullied nature ?

And now, what foreigner does this ? In what city of continental Europe is there any quarter to inhabit which would be a brevet of social distinction ? Is there any one, no matter how great, who could not live anywhere, no matter how humble, who asks or cares to know the amount of any man's fortune, how he spends, or why he saves it ? This frivolous foreigner,

with his *eau sucré* and kid-glove tastes, may be all that you say of him ; he may follow no serious career, nor care for any occupation beyond amusement ; but, take my word for it, he has fewer affectations, less of unreal pretensions—is, in a word, far less of a snob—than John Bull, and all because his social system makes no demand upon him to seem richer than he really is ; nor is it any one’s business to inquire whether he keeps a *chef* in his kitchen, or dines at a cheap chop-house.

One of the greatest evils of all this unreality is, that no man is ever able to talk with any sense of security on the most ordinary things around him. He is, as it were, taking everything on trust, and on the recommendation of some one about him. He dares not question the capacity of the butler whom he got from “ my lord ” any more than he can cavil at the bordeaux he got from my lord’s wine-merchant. Now all this might be borne if it only invaded the material circumstances of our lives ; but it has gone down far deeper : it has penetrated to our morals, and threatens seriously to poison the very best elements of our national character. Not satisfied, it would seem, with sham silver, sham damask, sham diamonds, and sham lafitte, we are now coming to a pass, in which we shall probably be content with sham honour in our men and sham virtue in our women.

Dumas—*père ou fils*, I forget which—explains by a little apologue the meaning of the phrase *demi-monde*. He says—"You find in a fruit-stall a basket of beautiful peaches whose price will be two francs each, and close beside them another basket, to all semblance exactly alike, the same in colour and perfume and downy softness, for twenty-five cents ; and, struck by this immense disparity in cost, you ask the reason. The fruiterer at once calls your attention to a minute, almost imperceptible speck on the cheaper article, and this *très petite tache* it is which damages all the excellence, and reduces to a mere fraction what seemed the equal of the best. Such," says he, "is *la femme demi-monde*." Now, if some real or supposed attraction in this article find favour with the foreigners, in England the success will be entirely owing to its semblance to something that costs more money, and the acceptance she will gain will be exactly proportioned to the credit she will be supposed to possess in some sphere more exalted than that she moves in. *Demi-monde* will gain a footing with us whenever it comes with the claim of rank or condition ; and just as the bottle of corked champagne is very fine drinking in the servants' hall, the damaged countess will be warmly welcomed when she condescends to a society four grades below what she was born to.

Middle-class folk have very often the impression that there is something fashionable in vice ; and consequently, when wickedness can be had reasonable, as a cheap article, it is an enormous gain. Now, *demi-monde*, as to real “*monde*,” is as the low-priced counterfeit to the true type. It is warranted to look so like that detection is next to impossible. It is declared to wear as long, and “families will find a great economy in using it generally.”

Society always gains somewhat in brilliancy, though it may have to pay for it in character, by the admission of these fallen angels from a superior sphere. Take the case, for instance, of a colonial corps, into which, for some misdeeds that demand oblivion, a man has dropped out of a crack regiment at home. He brings to the dreary mess-table, that tiresome dinner-party of exhausted talkers, an entire new stock of pleasantry. All his stories are new ; all the characters in them are novel. His opinions, his judgments, his slightest remarks, all smack of another world. He may—it is not impossible—shock these out-of-the-world people by traits of a life that nobody led in *their* day. He may hold cheaply maxims they regarded as immaculate rules of guidance, and he may proclaim principles which they have hitherto regarded with aversion. Let him, however, only continue amongst them for a little while,

and he will insure a following. The mere fact of a certain social standing will secure him disciples.

Exactly the same result occurs when *demi-monde* invades "the Family." Even in the Vicar of Wakefield's time,—and what a poor pretender was the *demi-monde* of that day—what a half-fledged starveling compared to the full-feathered bird of gorgeous plumage we now see it!—but in the Vicar's time the spurious article dazzled the eyes of rustic admirers, and, except that old *roué*, Mr Burchell, who doubtless had bought his experience pretty dearly, none dared to question the intrinsic value of the production.

Demi-monde is accepted in England, not from any resources it may possess of agreeability, not from its clever fac-simile of something infinitely better than it, but simply because it is supposed to be fashionable—just as Brown drinks dry champagne, making believe the while that he likes it best.

Au fond the nation is not enamoured of wickedness, and the English people never tried, as the French did, to put Virtue in the dock and arraign her by an indictment. Their fault is, however, a poor and slavish adulation of whatever is done by somebody higher and richer than themselves, and an abortive struggle to imitate it at any sacrifice.

The Frenchman likes libertinage, partly because of the licence it gives him to be whatever his humour

prompts him, and chiefly because he knows it to be wrong. The Italian likes it because it conduces to the indulgence of that indolence which finds even the commonest observances of society a bore and an infliction. The German likes it as a sort of spice thrown into the flat beer of his daily existence—a something to heighten flavour, and yet not invalidate the liquor. But John Bull has no sympathy with any of these tastes, and he would reject the practice and repudiate the principle to-morrow if he had not observed that they found favour with some distinguished individual who lived in Belgravia, and of whose receptions he read in the ‘Morning Post.’

We are, in fact, as to morals, pretty much what the French were as to religion in '95. Wraxall tells us that once, when getting his hair dressed by a barber in Paris, he chanced to inquire if the man were a Catholic; on which he let fall his comb and scissors in horror, and, stepping back, exclaimed—“Monsieur! I am a humble man, it is true, and a barber; but I'd beg you to understand that I have just as little religion as any man in France.”

If we wanted a proof that *demi-monde* is not congenial to our national tastes, we have it in our divorce courts. No people of Europe know so little how to conciliate vice with decorum as the English. We understand none of those refinements by which

wickedness is to be draped into something gracefully mysterious and attractive. With our unromantic realism, we want to seem as vicious as we are; and hence we exhibit a picture of conjugal life in these actions for separation unequalled throughout the world for its coarseness.

I will not say that they "do these things better in France," but they do them more decently, more becomingly. The great difference is perhaps this: infidelity with us is a commercial transaction; foreigners make seduction a branch of the fine arts.

For my own part, I am always afraid for the future of an individual who wants to have his vices cheap; I have the same foreboding for the destiny of a nation that desires to be wicked at small cost. There is some check to abandonment when its indulgence requires a strong purse; there is none when it can be practised without trenching on fortune, or invading those resources by which people exhibit themselves to their neighbours as decorous citizens, "thoroughly respectable"!!

A "NOW" AND A "THEN."

I WILL not say how many years it is since I first saw Florence. Of course, I was only a boy, a mere child, at the time ; but certainly there was not, throughout Europe, a city to compare with it in social excellence and enjoyment.

Though only a grand-ducal Court, many of the ministers accredited to it took rank as ambassadors. Our own was Lord Burghersh, than whom none sustained the honour of his country with more dignity, or dispensed the hospitalities of a high station with more elegance and urbanity. Many noble English families were amongst the residents ; and Prince Demidoff—the Old Prince, as he was distinctively called—kept almost open house at San Donato, and maintained, besides, an admirable corps of French actors, who gave, twice a-week, representations at his private theatre, to which, without invi-

tation, all persons presented to the Prince were free ; and, if they pleased to come in evening dress, were also eligible to partake of the splendid supper which followed the close of the entertainment. At Lord Burghersh's there was an amateur opera given every week, admirably sustained, the chief parts being filled by the two Princes Poniatowsky, and the prima donna being the present Princess Poniatowsky. The chief direction, it is needless to say, was intrusted to the noble host, a musician of the highest attainments. Besides these, Lord Mulgrave gave his English theatricals, probably never surpassed in the ability of those who figured in them, nor in the subsequent distinction that awaited them in life. Charles Mathews, I believe, made his first appearance on these boards, and, if I mistake not, once played in a piece where three of his fellow-actors lived to be Secretaries of State in England.

Lord Burghersh kept a pack of harriers, and hunted thrice a-week. There was a Jockey Club and a good racing subscription ; and what with riding-parties, whist, dancing, ecarté, and flirting, it was wonderful how rapidly time flew over, and how grave our faces grew when the calls of Parliament and the demands of the London season came to throw their shadows over the glorious spring-time on the Arno. I am certain it is not the mere spirit

of the *laudator temporis acti* that prompts me to speak of these things in such eulogy. I can acknowledge how in many ways the world of the present day has gained on the world of my boyhood. One travels better and faster; one dines better at small cost; the newspapers are more interesting, more varied, better written, and in a tone more congenial to the best spirit of society. Intercourse, generally, is safer than it used to be; we have some Bores, but few Bullies; but—I say it advisedly—society has not now, as it had then, that marvellous flavour of high-hearted pleasure, that racy enjoyment of people who were not too languid to be brilliant, nor too lackadaisical to be witty. The salt of the cleverest men and the most engaging women seasoned all intercourse; and the effort was to keep up to the pace of the pleasantest, and not, as we see it now, to bring all down to the uniform dulness of those Lord Dundrearies, who, except in their clever satirist, are the heaviest social infliction ever an age was cursed with.

The Haw-haw tone of those creatures, whose whiskers are so familiar to us in 'Punch,' did not exist in those days. It was the fashion for men to be manly and for women to be feminine. I will not say that, morally speaking, there was much to the advantage of the period. It was not better, though

assuredly not worse, than our present day; and in all that regards externals—in fitting deference to ladies, in the distinctive reverence due to those of station, as separated from others of neither station nor character—the past has much to boast over the present.

It was a fatal mistake for women to suffer the present free-and-easy tone in their *salons*. In losing the especial prestige that belonged to them as ladies, they surrendered all that divided them from a class who, in mere looks and toilette, can always be their rivals: and I will say it, that he who had attempted the lounging impertinence, the self-sufficient indifference to others, and the blank vacuity in all that regards agreeability, in the times I speak of, would have as certainly found himself excluded from society as the knave or the blackleg.

A certain amount of bad morals has always passed muster in the world; but the ingredient never did real mischief till it was associated with bad manners. It was a poison, but it was a poison in a well-stoppered phial. Now, the custom is not only to uncork the bottle, but, like the Swedish Prince with his scent *flacon*, to sprinkle the company!

It is certainly a great day—a grand era—for the stupid people! none so dull that he cannot be inso-

lent, none so stolid but he can smoke. We have taken the level of the lowest capacities as our social standard, and voted as vulgar all capacities above the dreary insufficiency of our dullest! Make the most of it, ye ensigns and small civil servants. It can't last for ever—no more than the Whig Government, or the shoddy aristocracy in America.

Now, they have it certainly all their own way; and I'd back Gumsley of the 109th, with his green complexion and his cat's mustaches, for a social success against Brinsley Sheridan, if you could bring him back, with all the wit of 'The Rivals' and all the fun of 'The Critic.' I suspect in our taste for tobacco we have grown to be Turkified, and place our El Dorado in a state of perfect "do-nothingness."

To tell the really pleasant people of the world to take their tone from such as these, is like ordering a regiment to take their time from a corps of cripples, and to march with a shuffle to suit the step of the lame. But the thing is done, and we see it, and there is no help for it; and now, to come back to this poor city, of which I am tempted to say, as the Emperor did on his return from Elba, "*Qu'avez-vous fait de cette (Florence) que je vous ai laissé si belle?*"

The passion for making large States may conduce to that pleasant Utopia called the Balance of Power,

though I have grave doubts of it; but assuredly it does not conduce to the happiness of mankind.

If so humble an object as happiness could occupy the lofty intelligences of statesmen, it might be worth while to consider for a moment whether small States had not, from the very fact of their unambitious position and narrow limits, immense advantages in this respect. Saxe-Weimar and Tuscany, as I knew them some thirty years ago, are the witnesses I should like to put in the box.

Weimar was of course very inferior in all claims to wealth, luxury, or refinement. It was a small village-like capital, with a miniature palace, a miniature theatre, a quaint old park, and a quaint old Platz.

The Court dined at four o'clock, and, rising at six, went out to stroll, grand duke and duchess and all, in the park. Dear me! what a strange medley of simplicity and formality, rural enjoyment and etiquette, cowslips and curtsies, many selected compliments and tobacco-smoke! but very soothing and tranquillising withal. If you sat down to whist with the Hoch-Wohl-Geboren, Herr Geheimerath, or the Staats Secretär, you could scarcely be ruined at groschen points any more than you would be driven to suicide by an unhappy passion for his yellow-haired daughter. Then life had nothing

startling, nothing sensational. There was a nice soft drowsy dulness that aided digestion, and never conduced to dreams.

In the evening the "society" assembled in a sombre old house, with narrow windows in front and a small somewhat gloomy-looking garden behind, where lived a large old white-haired man with his niece. Though a man of grand presence and imposing mien, with much dignity in his address, he was very fond of mixing with the young people of the company, and especially with a number of young Englishmen who at that period resided at Weimar for the advantages of military education. At the time I tell of, there was amongst them one who is now a duke, with one of the greatest historic names in Europe. With these generally this old gentleman frequently conversed, or, more frequently still, discoursed, telling of his travels in Italy, the objects which had held the chief place in his memory, the galleries he had seen, the society he had frequented, the distinguished men whose acquaintance he had made; and all these with occasional touches of picturesque description, traits of humour, and now and then a deep feeling which held his little auditory in rapt astonishment that he could hold them there entranced, while they could not, when he had done, recall any of the magic by which he

worked his spell. I say this because I myself remember to have tried to repeat a story he told, and once, more hazardous still, to convey some impression of how he talked; and with what lamentable failure let my present confession atone for. The task would have tried a better man, for him whom I essayed to represent was Goethe.

It was only a few years before that very time I speak of, that the choice society of Florence was wont to assemble each evening at a large palace on the Arno. It is the third as you pass down from the Ponte St Trinitá. There a royal personage, albeit she had deflected from her bright sphere, received, and all that was great and noble and brilliant, or, better still, beautiful, came to talk or to listen, be flattered or be worshipped, or, what I am half given to believe is nearly as good, to flatter and worship—not doing the thing grudgingly, or in any fashion of constraint, as in our prudish England we should do it, but “going in” with a will, and giving to those liquid vowels of the soft south all the ring and resonance of a deep-felt sentiment. It was a good type, that same society, of the mingled passion and weakness, the apathy, the earnestness, the vigorous energy, and the voluptuous indolence of Italian life. One talker, a tall, burly, stern-looking man, with red-brown hair and wide-set eyes, was pre-eminent above all for that

sort of brilliant discursive talk which has its charm at times for the veriest trifler and the deepest thinker. He was witty, but with a scathing, withering, blasting wit that burned where it fell: he disliked England, but with a sense of reverence for her great qualities. As to France, he hated and despised her. In her influence over his own country, Italy, he foresaw nothing but misfortune, and declared that to consummate Italian degeneracy no more was wanting than to infuse into the national character the scoffing incredulity and the degenerate levity of the Gaul. This man was Alfieri!

It was no mean era when Germany and Italy were so represented. And now—shall I go on to mark the contrast? No, I prefer holding the defendants over till next month, when the weather may possibly be somewhat cooler, and my sentence be more merciful than if pronounced with the mercury near 100°, and my brains at the temperature that makes paraffine explosive.

SECURITY ON THE "RAIL."

FROM what I can gather from the newspapers, the Railway Boards in England are showing no very zealous desire to co-operate with the Board of Trade in the adoption of measures of security against ruffianly travellers. They would seem to imply that their whole concern is in the transit of the man or the trunk committed to their charge ; that they are no more responsible for the morals than for the good manners of those they convey.

They argue briefly thus: The individual is to us a mere parcel of merchandise, for whose transport to a certain place we alone contract. He may be a heaven-born conversationalist, or the most foul-tongued blackguard and blasphemer ; we have no possible means of ascertaining to which category he belongs. There are no tests known to us by which he can be analysed ; nor, if there were, is there in the rapid

process of railway despatch the time to apply them.

We do not, for instance, condition to carry gunpowder, explosive shells, detonating-bombs, or such-like, by our passenger trains ; but yet if any traveller fills his portmanteau with Congreve rockets instead of linsey-woolsey, we have no help for it.

The carpet-bag you have just kicked back into its place under the opposite seat may be choke-full of the most inflammable and explosive ingredients, so that it was little short of a miracle that you, and all the others in your compartment, were not blown to the height of St Paul's. Was it ever suggested, however, that all luggage should be carefully rifled and examined before a train started, and that astute and intelligent practical chemists should be engaged to determine the contents of any suspicious phial or mysterious-looking powder, carefully investigating so-called hair-washes and pretended shaving-soaps ? I am afraid the practice would but ill conduce to that rapidity of transit for whose sake we start with a train in front and a train behind, and a bewildered station-master, and a stupid signal-man. In good sooth, no one would endure it ; and yet apply the difficulties of the luggage to the men, and you have at once all the embarrassments under which these Boards of Direction are now labouring.

There is not, in one word, any possible mode of ascertaining what sort of person is about to be conveyed from London to Exeter, any more than what may be the contents of his valise or his writing-desk.

It would be perfectly charming if there was any diagnostic process by which passengers could be sorted and distributed, and the care by which the small box marked fragile is separated from the rude contact of some coarse material applied to humanity.

Unhappily this is not so, and the most delicately-fashioned organisations are now obliged to take their chance in juxtaposition with all that is coarse, ill-bred, and brutal. But what an Elysium would the rail be if this great discovery could be effected! Imagine the station-master calling out, "The gentleman with the brown mustache here with these ladies; the stout gentleman next compartment with the parties for Stockport. This way, ma'am; there is the nursery train. Not there, sir, if you please; the rowdies are in that carriage yonder." This, I regret to say, cannot be; and so long as goats can afford the fare, they are free to travel with sheep, and even with lambs.

It is clear enough, so far as prevention goes, the railway folk are powerless; and yet prevention is the great desideratum; because, no matter what amount of surveillance you establish—what rapid communi-

cation with the guard — what co-operation with passengers in the adjoining carriage,—a row in a compartment will always be a most unpleasant incident, and its due investigation a matter of no small difficulty. The aggressive individual may have a colleague, apparently unacquainted with him—a Pal, as the slang would call him—ready to depose in his favour, and so to confuse testimony, that if the guard were not astute as Baron Martin, and as much master of the Law of Evidence, he might most excusably be puzzled which side to believe, and hesitate to determine whether the lady-complainant was an injured innocence or an outraged and offended Dido. Indeed, one has only to imagine for a moment the power of a restless, capricious, irritable passenger to summon to his or her aid a railway-guard at any instant to adjudicate upon some supposed grievance, to make railroad travel the most refined species of mental torture ever conceived by man. Fancy a police-court, with the chance of a collision and a smash—and certainly the prospect is not enticing; and yet this is exactly what we should have. The timorous invalid in the double blanket yonder, is alarmed that his *vis-à-vis* has a leather case slung round him that may contain a telescope, but not impossibly may hold a revolver. He does not like his look; his eye is cold and stern; he is abrupt

of speech, and has a short, sharp way of replying when addressed. The other passengers have got out, and he is alone with this stranger, who has now divested himself of his overcoat and thrown his gloves into his hat—preparations, and for what? The terrified rings at once to summon the guard, and to whisper his fears—fears so palpably expressed, and so plainly acknowledged, that the stranger cannot for a moment doubt he is regarded as a murderer. Meanwhile the uneasy virtue in the next carriage is screaming for aid, because a bagman has stuck a glass in his eye, and is emulating the admiring stare of Lord Dundreary.

The incessant and frivolous appeals of silly, unreasonable, and affected travellers, would soon demonstrate that the worst miseries of the rail are not the physical perils, but all the varying moods and capricious humours of a vexed humanity.

I repeat, therefore, the Direction can do very little. They can establish a periodical inspection, and send a guard down the train at intervals to peep into the cages and see that the beasts are not tearing each other; or if they be, that they are tearing the animal that was the first to spring on the others: beyond this they are powerless. What is then to be done? I have thought much over the subject, and, I grieve to say, without any great light having broken

in upon me. At last, however, an expedient did present itself to my mind, which, if not capable of meeting all the difficulties of the case, certainly will serve to lighten and diminish many of the ills which now render English railroads something worse than Hounslow and Bagshot in the days of Dick Turpin.

This is the age of qualifications. To enable a man to be one thing, he must first of all show that he has been something else, albeit occasionally very different. To be a "Commissioner" anywhere, you must have been a barrister of six years' standing; though what the aforesaid six years represented, except idleness, bitter beer, newspaper reporting, and cigars, I never met the man who could tell me. To be a tide-waiter, or a police constable, or a gauger, or a Foreign-Office clerk, you must not only undergo examination in Ollendorf and Colenso, but be a proficient in a variety of things that the day after your appointment you will sweep from your brain as so much unprofitable rubbish.

Now let us apply this system to the rail. Let every man who travels—and who does not sometimes?—provide himself with a certificate as to character, signed by two householders, and countersigned by a physician. They need be neither long-winded nor diffuse; indeed, brevity, which is the soul of wit, is

the quintessence of wisdom. By producing this—a small piece of card, we shall say—when he demands his ticket at the pay-office, the clerk is enabled at once to assign him his suitable and appropriate place in the train. A very few initial letters, whose signification may be immediately acquired, will serve every purpose of indication. Thus, a gentleman asking a first-class for Chester, hands in his card marked "P. S.," and is at once recognised to be Perfectly Safe. Another, with a mere "S." (Safe), will be accepted as one with a somewhat inferior amount of surety; "H." would imply Hazardous, and demand a certain amount of precaution; while "D. T.," no longer symbolic of spirituous insanity, would inspire an extreme watchfulness, as signifying Dangerous in a Tunnel.

You will say, however, that no man would willingly carry about with him a written and authorised disparagement of his character, that he never would expose to public gaze a declaration that pronounced him a "D. L." (not Deputy-Lieutenant, however, but Dangerous to Ladies); but there you would be wrong, since, in default of even this qualified amount of character, he would be obliged to travel in a certain compartment called the "Unqualified Car," where every species of unwarranted rascal and vagabond entered without question. Better a thousand times

the meekest voucher for a man's good behaviour, the mildest assurance of possible good-conduct, than this complete outlawry!

What immense facilities would the system offer to travel! The timid elderly gentleman or the nervous lady, by a very small addition to her fare, could journey with a company warranted "S. R." (Safe and Respectable); while harder organisations would practise a courageous economy by entering the compartment labelled "G. C." (Generally Correct); and a still bolder class, trusting to self-protection, would step into the smoking-van, where "Latakia" was permitted, and ladies came "if they liked it."

MOUNTAINEERS AND BALLOONERS.

I LIKE harmless associations. I am always pleased to hear of Antiquarian Societies ; Horticultural Unions, and even Clubs for the Collection of Beetles and Butterflies, find favour with me ; and one of the chief reasons of my esteem for them is, that they are usually modest and unobtrusive. Your collector is ordinarily a peaceful, retiring, self-contained man ; his coin, or his manuscript, or his fragment of majolica completely engross him ; and, if they render him indifferent to the great interests and events around him, they also serve to make him very tolerant of others who take a different view of life and its duties.

Besides this, they now and then emerge from the dark recesses of their lucubrations, and contribute a noticeable fact or two to the mass of our knowledge. There is, however, one Society whose members are

constantly thrusting themselves before public attention, inviting observation as to their doings, and asking interest for their exploits, which has ever appeared to me the most absurd, the most uninteresting, and the most barren of all useful results, of all known associations. I mean the "Alpine Club."

Why men should form themselves into a club to climb mountains, has no more common sense in it than that they should unite to have their hair cut or their teeth extracted in common.

A Whist Club, a Driving Club, a Cricket Club, has its significance. You want co-operation, and you unite to secure that amount of companionship which your pursuit requires; but what division of wit—what reciprocity of skill—is there in tramping over a glacier? What you need is a guide and a pair of strong shoes. But why associate yourself with others for this? You cannot affect to say that a single fact in science—a single useful or even curious observation—has ever resulted from your union. You have gone up to the Grands-Mulets or the Col du Géant, and you have come down again—two events interesting doubtless to yourself, but of no more moment to the world to which you publish them than the name and birthplace of the peasant who made your alpenstock. Now, I do not object to this mode of passing your time, only provided that you are not vainglo-

rious enough to write letters about it in the newspapers. Be pleased to bear in mind that if every one was to record some remarkable incident in life, simply because it possessed a great interest for himself, we should have our newspapers filled with details more personal than pleasing. One gentleman would have to record his having drunk twenty-one tumblers of whisky-punch at a sitting; another his having eaten six pounds of beef-steak at a meal,—feats just as curious and fully as perilous as the ascent of Mont Blanc. Climb your mountain, in God's name; go up eight or ten thousand feet above the sea, and take your fill of frostbites and ophthalmia and embarrassed respiration, and come down again when you've had enough of them; all I ask is, don't ask me to read about you—don't swagger down into Chamouni with the little band in front of you, as if you were a hero, and had done something beyond blistering your feet and inflaming your eyelids. For all that is useful in human nature, you are not a whit better than a dancing dervish. He, like you, puts himself out of the pale of society and Windsor soap for a period, and I never knew any one that liked his company the better for it.

Now, let it not be supposed that I who write this am one who hold cheap manly exercises and athletic pursuits. A late critic—he was a Cockney, to be

sure—in noticing a volume of these lucubrations, describes me as a *laudator temporis acti*, and consequently would persuade the world that I am, as regards muscular Christianity, on the retired list. To this I beg to answer, that I am ready to row, ride, swim, spar, or pitch a sledge with him to-morrow ; and that I pledge myself, if he be the better man, to give him all the honour of his victory in a future page.

Your pleasant men are, besides, very rarely pedestrians. Horsemen and yachting-men are almost always companionable. The pursuit that exacts too much physical labour, is an enemy to that repose of mind so essential to agreeability. The strain on the tendons is felt on the intellect ; and the fellow, weighted with hobnailed shoes and shrouded with a blue gauze veil, is not in the condition favourable to easy genial talk, and that light gossip that are so enjoyable. Mind that I distinguish the Mountaineer, the man of glaciers and crevasses, here, from the pleasant fellow who strolls with you after breakfast through the plantations, talking of everything, from the poet Tennyson to Piedmontese truffles. There is a certain business-like preoccupied air in your regular walker, that gives him a strong resemblance to the penny-postman. You see that he has a number of distinct places to visit, and that he is conning over in his mind his “addresses” as he goes.

Take all the pleasantest men of your acquaintance, and tell me frankly how few are there Mountaineers amongst them; and did you ever meet an Alpine Clubist that you didn't wish at the top of the Righi?

Is there not an intolerable sameness in all their talk? Is it not always the same story of the "steps cut with the hatchet," and of "the rope that was too short"? Have you not the brave bold guide and the bad stupid one as regularly as Hogarth's two apprentices; and are you not heartily sick—I am—of "We were distinctly seen from Chamouni, and could plainly hear the salute of guns with which they welcomed our appearance on the summit"?

I never read one of these descriptions without envying the inhabitants of Holland, and thinking what a blessing it must be to live where there are no Alps, and consequently no bores to climb them.

But there is another objection to this sort of fraternity. The great mass of men cannot afford to do anything extraordinary or uncommon without becoming positively insupportable. We all of us have some experiences of the creature who has been up the Nile, and talked sphinxes and pelicans till we wished him under the Great Pyramid. Your Alp-walker is, however, a greater infliction still, for he insists on dashing his explorings with a touch of personal heroism. It was *he* who did or did not do

something but for which the whole party would have been precipitated, or engulfed, or swept away, heaven knows how or where.

There is but one condition on which I could forgive these mountain-climbers—which is, that they would not come down again.

Next to these in order of utter uselessness are the people who go up in balloons, and who come down to tell us of the temperature, the air-currents, the shape of the clouds, and amount of atmospheric pressure in a region where nobody wants to go, nor has the slightest interest to hear about.

Is there any one, I ask, who couldn't write a balloon ascent just as amusing as those we read of every week in the papers?

You start with the account of all the cubic feet of gas employed in the inflation, and then you proceed to describe how all Kent or Surrey, or wherever it was, lay beneath you like a map, and "we could see the Thames meandering for miles like a silver thread." Then come clouds, and a smart shower of rain, and two loud claps, "louder than any thunder, made by the sudden collapse of the balloon as we gained the great altitude of" a hundred thousand miles, let us say. Of course the Queen's health is drunk here, and "my companion essayed—with not very remarkable success, I own—a verse of our national anthem."

Then you bob about for an hour and a half, realising the old nursery rhyme, "Here we go up, up, up," and at last you come down, down, but not downy, but into a tree; and the grapnel drags, and one jumps out, and the other is pitched after him; the balloon is secured by the country people, and all return to town, to go over the selfsame weary exploit some weeks later; the worthlessness of the whole being but poorly concealed under the mockery of a scientific report, that might for every possible purpose have been as well composed at the "Star and Garter" as at a height of five thousand feet above the earth.

Modern medicine has a grand imaginative vein through it, and who knows but the time may come when an asthmatic patient will be sent up to respire above the clouds, or bronchitis will be treated by an atmospheric pressure of so much to the inch? Till then, however, these gentlemen's experiences have no interest for us; and when we hear of Mr Glaisher "in nubibus," we are tempted to cry out, like the man in the play, "*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*"

THE LUXURY OF LIBERTY.

It would form a very strange and a very instructive subject of inquiry, to investigate how far the great law of compensations—that give-and-take principle which really seems the essential condition of all organised nature—enters into all the acts and events of our daily life; showing us not merely that there is no such thing in existence as unalloyed good or evil, but that for every benefit we receive a certain sacrifice is exacted; and that the good things of life are ticketed with their price, like the objects in a bazaar.

A proper understanding of this would take away a great deal of that discontent and grumbling one sees around us; and men would learn that within certain limits happiness was pretty equally distributed, and that even those who appear to have won the great prizes, have somehow or other paid for

them more heavily than we wot of. What particularly led me to reflect on this matter was the state of excitement, amounting to irritation, that is now witnessed in certain parts of Southern Italy at the sudden increase of all taxation. Hitherto, all that they have known of a "United Italy" has been rose-coloured. New schemes of industry developed, railroad activity, public works, private enterprises, national festivals, royal receptions, crosses, pensions, and promotions, have all had their day; but at last has come the hour when the "whistle" must be paid for. To enable the State to be generous, it must be rich, and this is precisely the thing it is not. In the maintenance of a great army and a very costly fleet Italy has spent enormous sums, and is pretty much in the condition of a man who has laid out so much money in bars and padlocks, that there is nothing left inside the house to guard. The State, however, wants money, and having taken all the loose cash of the convents and church-lands, has at last to come down on the laity.

"This, then, is liberty!" cries the labouring man in the street. "Liberty means dear bread, dear beans, dear oil and wine and maccaroni. In the old days of bad government all these were cheap. If I only worked five days a-week, and gave two others to the saints and my own pleasures, I had enough!

This new Freedom, however, has put an end to all this. To make this United Italy, it would seem that I must work more and eat less than heretofore." And this is perfectly true. I have not a word to say against Liberty. I only premise that it is a thing to be paid for. Occasionally it is well worth the money, as we have it in England. But occasionally, as America shows us, it is one of the veriest shams and humbugs that has ever misled humanity.

Now, the assertion is not perhaps pleasant to make or to listen to, but it is a fact, that corrupt governments are generally cheap ones—that is to say, that oppressive rulers are often disposed to conciliate their subjects by the diffusion of material benefits, while they grind them down by restrictive laws and tyrannical edicts. The duchy of Modena, for instance, was more arbitrary in its sway—more insolently irresponsible in the exercise of its wayward rule—than any country of modern Europe, and yet no people ever paid less taxes than the Modenese.

How lightly were the Neapolitans taxed under the Bourbons! and so we might proceed upwards and show that for every concession to freedom there came a price, till we reached Tuscany, where enlightenment and civilisation stood certainly highest in the peninsula, and where, at the same time, taxation was heaviest, and men saw that liberty was just as much

a luxury as plate-glass, or jewels, or champagne : that is to say, it was a charming thing if you could afford it, but was by no means a positive necessity ; and, like all luxuries, it had only charms for those who had tasted of it, and felt its attractions.

Liberty has very fine things in her gift, it is true. Personal freedom, immunity from arrest without sufficient cause shown and legal authority invoked, free discussion, free speech, religious toleration, untrammelled education, are no small boons ; but there is not one of them whose due appreciation does not exact either a certain amount of reflection, or of information ; whereas the humblest and the most narrow-minded can comprehend the hardship of increased taxation, and there is no intelligence so limited but can take in the fact, that it is less pleasant to pay ten centimes than five.

Liberty, besides, was always represented to be as much a man's birthright as the air he breathed. Our reformers told us that we are only, in asking for it, demanding our own : how came it then that it was so costly ? Why, if it were the inalienable possession of humanity, should it be paid for ? This certainly is capable of explanation, but we are not to be surprised if the masses have not hit on the solution as readily as we might wish.

The organised pressure which we call Liberty re-

quires policemen, and magistrates, and jails, and penitentiaries, and courts of law to punish libel and repress slander, not to speak of all the appliances to prevent religious freedom from degenerating into blasphemy, and free speech becoming a scandal and a shame; and these are all parts of a very costly machinery.

Irresponsible governments work cheap, just because they can dispense with all this mechanism. The Pacha who says, "Cut off his head," does not cost the State he serves one-fiftieth part of a Chief-Justice, before whom the culprit comes, after five months' imprisonment, to be arraigned by an Attorney-General with four thousand a-year, and a corps of witnesses like an army. I don't say I prefer Ottoman justice to English; but if I want the latter, I must be content to pay for it. Now, the Italians at this moment are in that crisis which all people must pass through, and they want all the benefits of good government and all the cheapness of the bad.

The misfortune is, there are nations that would positively prefer tyranny, oppression, and cruelty, if they only came accompanied by cheapness and an easily-provided existence, to all the benefits of the highest civilisation, if linked with a high tariff; just as the Irish peasant liked his old lawless, reckless, devil-may-care landlord, that sometimes took a shot

at him, sometimes forgave him his rent, better than the modern agriculturist with his Scotch steward, who will neither overlook arrears nor weeds, and who, if he is never cruel, is equally far from any impulsive generosity in his behalf.

Naples, like Ireland, is just in this state of awakening. They have each of them emerged from barbarism, but it was a barbarism so congenial and so cheap withal, that they'd almost rather have it back again, than all this newfangled Freedom, that makes bread so dear and saints' days so seldom.

“TAKE CARE OF THE PENCE, AND THE
POUNDS WILL,” ETC. ETC. ETC.

WHAT should we say if an order came forth from the Master of the Mint, or some such competent authority, “That all the copper coinage of the country should be submitted to a most searching test to ascertain its purity—that penny-pieces and halfpennies were no longer to pass current without a new certificate of their genuineness, while gold and silver were to circulate as usual—all warranty of their unadulterated value being deemed needless”?

I ask, would not the common-sense reading of such an edict be, that it was exceedingly absurd and ridiculous?

Would not men of ordinary intelligence say, “It is not of very great moment to me that I am now and then imposed on by a ‘rap halfpenny :’ I can sustain the loss with composure, and bear it without fretting ;

but if I constantly find a number of bad shillings in my change, and if occasionally I detect some spurious sovereigns in my purse, the affair is more serious, and I am certainly disposed to resent it" ?

This is precisely what our Government is at this moment enacting in England with respect to Civil-Service employment. The men who are to fill all the inferior offices of the State are to be rigidly and severely examined, while all those who succeed to the higher employments are to enter upon them untried, untested, and unproven. To be a Gauger, you must be a historian, a geographer, an arithmetician, and a naturalist. To be the Governor of a colony, you may be a "Cretin"! To convey a despatch across Europe, you must prove your efficiency in French and decimal fractions, and such other knowledge: to be the writer of that same despatch, no such test is asked of you. The bearer of the message is put through his parts of speech. The writer may—and very often does, too—revel in all the unrestrained freedom of bad grammar.

Perhaps you will say that the system is progressive, and that, these initial tests once submitted to, the man proves his fitness for the highest office. To this I simply say, When did you ever hear of a penny-piece growing into a crown; or have you any experience of a farthing that became a sovereign? No;

the whole system is based on this great principle, Take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themselves; and certainly so they have done. This legislation is all theirs. It is they who have decreed it. They have declared aloud that shocking abuses are abroad. The poor are hourly defrauded. "No one can tell the number of base penny-pieces that are in circulation. This must be looked to at once." It is thus the Pounds have spoken, and God help the Pennies! Gold and silver legislate for bronze and copper, and of course bronze and copper have nothing to say to it. Now, if I know anything about myself, I am not a Radical—not, perhaps, so much because these people have not occasionally a show of reason in what they ask, as from the dislike I have ever felt for their company. They are an overbearing, dogmatical, obtrusive class, loud of speech, coarse of manner, and insolent in bearing; but, without any Radicalism whatever, I would in all humility ask, Why keep all your tests for the coppers? Why not now and then analyse a sixpence? If I could screw up courage enough, I would add, Why not put a half-sovereign in the crucible? Surely it is of more moment that these be genuine than the others. Would not the nation have more patience for a Penny-postman that missent a letter, than for a Governor who lost a colony? and yet it is for the Penny-postman's

education we are so vitally concerned ; and the Governor may be anything, only a shade above the requirements for Bedlam.

Have able and efficient public servants by all means ; even in the lower walks of office take care that you are not served stupidly or ill. Let the penny-pieces be genuine copper ; but, in heaven's name, don't ask them to be more, and do not submit them to the test applicable to bullion, while you let the same bullion go free unquestioned.

But this is not all. The pennies are not merely required to be good pennies, worth four farthings, but they are asked to be useful in various other ways foreign to their original intention : as ounce-weights, letter-pressers, and heaven knows what besides ; that is, the Tide-waiter is examined in acoustics, and the War-Office clerk probed in comparative anatomy and numismatics. Like the Irishman's pig, you " want him to go to Cork, and you turn his head to Fermoy."

In the name of all that is Chinese, what is this for ? Why must a man bring to one pursuit in life forty acquirements that would adapt him for another ? If you go to a dentist to relieve you from the pangs of a toothache, is your first inquiry whether he has ever operated for cataract, or how often he has tied the subclavian artery ? And yet this is not all ; for if

the dentist, being a bungler, should smash your jaw, and then tell you it is a satisfaction to you to know that the man who makes his artificial teeth is thoroughly up in osteology, and a deep proficient in animal chemistry, he would be exactly carrying out the present system. Are we, I ask once more, to take all the gold and silver on trust, and only scrutinise the brass?

What amount of shamefacedness could promulgate such a plan, is hard to conceive. I have heard from a Secretary of State, French so execrable that it would reject the veriest unpaid attaché. I have read despatches from similar hands that would have "plucked" an exciseman; and are these to enjoy high place and station and salary, and yet some poor-devil clerk go out a beggar and houseless because at the age of forty he cannot render Bonnycastle's Algebra, or "mention all the one-eyed men of distinction since the days of William Rufus." I implore most eagerly that there should be some test for the bullion. Let us have a Secretary for the Colonies put through his physical sciences. I'd like to examine the Senior Lord of the Admiralty on the best mode of "footing turf" in a wet bog; and with all his varied acquirements, I'd like to take the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the merits and demerits of the "Bauchet system of horse-training." The "Pounds," however,

will not have this, for they are resolved to "take care of themselves." Perhaps the theory is that they are too elevated for observation—that, if the base of the pyramid be ornamented, it is no matter what is at the top.

At all events, the abuse is now unbearable. If the crown-piece shirk the crucible, you have no right to throw the penny into it. If we must become Prussian or Pekinite—for they are about the same—make a free trade in office life, open the Indian Viceroyalty to competitive examination, and let the First Lord of the Treasury go up to Burlington House, and be put through his Colenso like the rest of us. But, above all, let us not keep all the scrutiny for the small people—all the prizes for the big ones. Do not stamp education, in fact, as you do "cheap broth"—a very good thing for the poor; and do not be, as the adage says, "Penny wise and pound foolish."

CENTENARIES AND COMMEMORATIONS.

I FERVENTLY hope that no indiscreet but enthusiastic admirers of mine in some future age will ever think of honouring me by a centenary. I know the temptation will be strong. I feel that a grateful posterity will be eager to repay what contemporaries have been so lax in acknowledging. I can imagine, too, how the words "O'DOWD COMMEMORATION" would read on a placard; and I can fancy the "snobs" of another century running about with "original portraits" and "curious manuscriptal remains" of what they will doubtless call "Our Immortal Humorist." Now I hereby desire to place on record my formal protest against the whole proceeding. It is not that the great Shakespeare sham has given me a hearty disgust to such celebrations, but that I feel that they are as false in logic as in taste; and there never was, and probably never will be, a reputation high enough to

stand above the ridicule that attaches to such vulgar and low-lived adulation.

Had the great Bard's bust been anything but plaster-of-Paris, it would have blushed at the company by which it was surrounded. In the first place, these people start with something very like a vote of censure on their ancestors, who, having had a great man amongst them, were stupid enough not to recognise his genius, or admit his greatness. Now, for my own part, I suspect that the ordinary vice of every age is in over-estimating itself, and consequently thinking far too highly of its own products, whether the same be enormous gooseberries or great generals. I am strongly disposed to believe that our present-day gods and goddesses will be thought very little of by our next-century successors, and we ourselves held proportionately cheap, for the intense admiration we have accorded them. There is this, however, to be said for the judgments of contemporaries, that they could recognise and appreciate the fitness of the man to his time ; and this, of course, no opinions of a remote posterity could pretend to vie with.

I remember hearing how congregations used to cry at Dean Kirwan's sermons. I bought the book, and I vow I almost cried too over the ten-and-sixpence I paid for it ; and yet there is no denying the power this man wielded. The scenes his churches witnessed

of enthusiastic feeling—of benevolence, exaggerated to a perfect hysterical passion—are not transcended by the records of Mrs Siddons in *Lady Macbeth*. The offertory-plate was filled with brooches, rings, bracelets : whatever of ornament adorned the brow or breast of beauty, was thrown half-frantically to swell the sum that went to assuage the sorrows of wretchedness, or save from destitution the widow and the orphan. Read one of these appeals now, and if it will move you to contribute a sixpence, you must have a heart open as day to melting charity ; and yet this was the subject of Grattan's beautiful eulogy—this was he who, “in feeding the lamp of charity, exhausted the lamp of life,” &c.

Now, we have nothing to induce us to believe that our grandfathers and grandmothers were a soft-hearted generation. From all that we can learn of them, they were pretty much like ourselves. They had the same sort of pomps, vanities, and temptations as we have, and doubtless met them in a spirit like our own. I am willing to admit that they were not worse, but I do not believe that they were better than we. How came it, then, that this preacher, whose eloquence, to our thinking, is anything but impassioned, and whose appeals we can read now as coolly as we can over our ‘Bradshaw,’ moved enraptured audiences at his will, and made even those who came

to deny his powers remain to testify, by solemn acts of benevolence, to his persuasiveness? Take what is before our eyes at this moment: is there any one bold enough to say that Spurgeon's sermons, to which twenty thousand persons weekly listen in rapt wonder and worship, will some fifty years hence have fifty readers—ay, even five? And not that the man has not power and ability—his success has put that much on record; but that there is a species of power and ability that must come aided by the individuality, and that they who have not witnessed the exercise of these gifts, when so accompanied, are not fair judges of the effect.

We are often wrong, then, in saying that this or that man who achieved a celebrity in some bygone day would not have been distinguished had he lived in our own era. The chances are we should have taken him at the same price as our forefathers did. Let us be slow to disparage the age in which a charlatan was made much of—not only because there never yet was a time without such examples, but also because the charlatan was undeniably a cleverer fellow than we are willing to believe him. There are, however, now and then instances of men so transcendently great, that what they have done remains an authority for future ages, and becomes an eternal possession to the land that bore them. These men,

if they be writers, imbue the language with their own genius, enriching the humblest who talks with the bright flashes of their soul, the charming vagrancies of their fancy, and the heart-stirring eloquence of their passion. Such men commemorate themselves. What can you do for them?—how exalt them, how honour them? Let your homage take what shape it will, it must ever be in its proportions absurdly unequal to the object of its devotion. A statue has its meaning, certainly, but beyond that we can do nothing. Of the success of commemoration festivals, processions, concerts, monster dinners, brass bands, and brass orators, let that sad spectacle in honour of Shakespeare testify.

A small town in the east of Italy, where Rossini had once passed some time, conceived the idea of commemorating the great Maestro's sojourn amongst them by a statue. The zeal was unhappily greater than the wealth, and after some months of unwearied toil the managing committee announced the sad fact, that although one high-spirited individual had of himself contributed the pedestal, which was already built, and ready to receive the statue, the moneyed contributions only reached twelve hundred francs. In this dilemma they, with a courage that all must commend, waited on the illustrious composer, and asked in what way he would himself advise this sum

to be appropriated. "You want a statue," said he, thoughtfully ; "and you have, it seems, only got as far as the pedestal."

"Yes, *Illustrissimo*, that is our case."

"And you have twelve hundred francs besides towards your object?"

The committee bowed their acquiescence.

"Give me the money, then, and I'll stand on the pedestal half an hour next Tuesday. I must leave on Wednesday, or I'd repeat the performance."

I wish I could record that the committee had been men of sufficient generosity to appreciate, and of taste to avail themselves of, this offer. That unadorned pedestal would have been a monument to make their town illustrious for ages. A neat inscription, too, could have recorded the fact "that here, on such a day in May," &c. &c.

We go to visit battle-fields with the very vaguest information as to the position of the contending, hosts ; here, however, one small platform would hold us to the hard fact where the great Maestro had stood, and one-half the imagination we deploy to people La Haye Sainte or Hougomont would suffice to present Rossini before us, with his roguish eye, his humorous mouth, and that general look of self-satisfied shrewdness that is the most marked characteristic of the great composer.

Now, I might ask, is there not something in this suggestion of Rossini's well worth our consideration? Are there not men amongst us who would like to sell their reversion of future fame for a little present assistance? That ten thousand I am to have at my grandmother's death, is to me a mere dissolving view of affluence. I want it now. I won't go so far as to wish the old lady in paradise, though why that should be accounted a hardship is not so easy to understand. But in my pressing need I am ready to barter my "Great expectations" for something "All the year round." I might like a statue very much, as a hero; but to the pride of that commemoration of me in the next century, it is just possible I might prefer a suit of clothes now. Would not Shakespeare himself rather have had one jolly evening's carouse with Ben Jonson, than have been assured of that blessed exhibition of maudlin penny-a-liners and dramatists that we all witnessed a few weeks ago?

The Florentines have just announced a commemoration of Dante. It is to take place next April, on the six hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth. That they will deal with the matter with more taste than ourselves is easy to believe—that whatever of literary distinction Italy possesses will aid and assist the festival, we may feel assured. It is as much the revival of Italian greatness which will be celebrated

as the fame of the greatest of all Italians ; and yet the difficulties will be immense. What can they say for Dante that his works have not said immeasurably better ? How proclaim the fame that already fills the earth ?

What man, when a sou'wester is straining the canvass and making the foretopsail like a board, so that the craft cleaves the water like a fish, takes down the bellows by way of increasing the wind ? Yet this is precisely what your commemorators are doing. They are running about with that wretched bellows of theirs, to add to the gale that is only short of a hurricane ; and so once more I say, Let me have no commemoration.

When the Crimean war broke out, Mr Gladstone declared that he would have no loan—the generation who made the war should pay for it. So say I. I will not borrow what posterity may have to pay. I leave it, of course, to an intelligent public to understand in what way I prefer to take out my “immortality.”

PERSONAL AND PECULIAR.

GRACIOUS and compassionate reader, it is not often that I inflict you with a personality; nor, indeed, do I remember such a transgression since the day on which I told you about a certain friend of Gioberti. I am now, however, disposed to sin once more. The occasion is a letter I have this morning received from Mrs O'D., and which, touching a little as it does on "Men and Women, and other Things in General," is not foreign to the matter of these papers.

A great contemporary—one of the very pleasantest fellows that ever talked at a dinner-table—Jules Janin, once made a *feuilleton* on his own marriage. Now I am not fully certain I should like to have gone so far as this, but I see no objection to quoting certain portions of Mrs O'Dowd's correspondence, reserving to myself the right which Ministers are wont to exercise in blue-books, of omitting all that is

most piquant, and consequently most interesting. With an abruptness worthy of Demosthenes she opens thus: "They are at it again, dear Corny, as bad as ever, and never was anything less provoked by our people. The Dublin demonstration was beautiful, and the coal-porters preserved the peace with their bludgeons in a manner that made every one delighted; and the consequence is, that the savages in the north, driven frantic by the elegant success here, came down on our poor suffering co-religionists, as Doctor Cullen said, 'like a wolf on the fold,' and they have half destroyed the town of Belfast. The cry is now '*Sauve qui peut!*' Lord Carlisle is gone already, and, with the help of the Virgin, I mean to be off by Saturday. When this reaches you, you will therefore look out for a comfortable house in some pleasant city where there is a nice social circle, with a good climate and everything cheap. You wouldn't know Dublin, how dear it has grown. Nobody thinks of anything better than a car; and the Viceroy, I'm told, puts the household one day every week on cold mutton, and makes Friday a black fast, which is very popular with our people. Whisky-negus is given at the Castle balls, and the aides-de-camp are reduced to a pint of Guinness at dinner; and no wonder, mutton is ninepence, and as much bone as meat.

“There’s another reason too, Corny, why I want to leave this. Tom M’Grath says it’s all bother about your being a ‘Commissioner’ or anything else under the Government; that you’re just gallivanting about the Continent for your own fun—dining out wherever you can, and making love wherever they’ll let you: a nice life of it, and very respectable to a man of your time of life, seeing that on your birthday last Tuesday you were * * *.” Here I avail myself of the ministerial asterisks, and proceed. “And that’s not all; but that you are abusing the Church and the Cardinals, and everything that is holy and decent, not even sparing the country that gave you your birth and your wife—two blessings that you oughtn’t to forget, no matter, as Tom says, ‘however perverted foreign habits have made you.’

“You may think how pleasant my situation is, that I never go out to take tea that I don’t hear somebody say, ‘Write off that to your husband, Mrs O’Dowd—it will be as good as a box of cigars to him;’ or, ‘There’s a bit of gossip for Corny; that’s what he lives on just now.’

“And is this the ‘place under the Government,’ ‘the roving commission to look after the state of Europe’?

“It was only yesterday Mrs Brady said to me, ‘Mrs O’Dowd, you’ll find yourself quite a celebrity

on the Continent. You'll be as well known as Barney Williams or Mr Cobden !' Wasn't that a nice speech to make to a respectable married woman ?

"Tom will take me as far as Dover, and then go back ; so that, if you want to write home or make any family inquiries, he will be for the present your"—heaven forgive Mrs O'Dowd her orthography !—an additional "r" would have cost her so little ; and she need not have written the word "Co-respondent !"

It was a small thing to be vexed about, but I couldn't get over it ; and I walked about all day muttering to myself, "My co-respondent, Tom M'Grath !" My second reflections were these : Married life is little suited to the habits of the Continent. It will do, perhaps, with the natives, because *they* wear their chains gracefully, and occasionally festoon them, as I have seen certain jaunty galley-slaves do, in picturesque loops all around them ; but we Saxons or Celts take a more serious view of our sentence, and accept the words "for life" with a far graver significance. Then we have a regular glut of what are called the "delights of a home." Our detestable climate and coal-fires, our small houses and peculiar notions of hospitality—all lead us to assemble in our own "wigwams," and exchange the amenities of civilisation with our own Squaws.

The foreigner is not driven to this. The nights are never too wet to go out to the café or the theatre ; nor, reciprocally, to prevent some two or three intimates to drop in and chat with your wife. I have grown to like this. I have lived long enough to feel that to hoard up one's genial pleasantries—one's conversational stores—one's social resources in many ways, for mere home consumption, is as arrant avarice as to swear you will never give sixpence away for anything but for family expenses. I hold myself above that. Now my late experiences in life have largely developed these charities in my nature. I cannot remember the day I have played the miser of my gifts, for I do not know when I last dined at home. If Mrs O'D. should join me, what becomes of these rich outpourings of my pleasantries ? How am I to give way to the expansive richness of my fancy, in describing my life in Ireland, on my own estate, in my paternal halls, surrounded by my attached peasants ? Those hunting-parties !—ah, those hunting-parties ! how Compiègne and Fontainebleau pale before them ! That great country-house, filled with distinguished guests—how, I ask, am I to dash off one of these grand frescoes, when Mrs O'Dowd stands by with a whitewash brush to “smudge” the whole picture ?—and she would. I know that woman well. Her own sister told me that as a child she

never built a card-house herself, but went all round the table, knocking down the others.

That has been her mission through life. The world is full of these stone-and-mortar people, who would rather take shelter in a dungeon than under a silken canopy.

What is to be done? The peril is imminent. Shall I be jealous of Tom M'Grath, and order her peremptorily to go reside with her mother?—a grand Russian sort of policy that! Being jealous is, however, a great mistake in connubial strategy. It is simply showing your wife a raw spot in your nature which she may irritate at will; and I shrewdly suspect Mrs O'D. would “hit the blot” at once. Besides this, “mocking is catching;” and even already I am not over well pleased with my friend Tom's attentions. What business was it of his to dilate upon my life and habits? Why should he bring under my wife's notice those broadcast opinions I am scattering, and which would be as cruelly spoiled by Mrs O'D.'s supervision as ever was a French comedy by the Censor?

To telegraph to my wife that the Continent was in a fearful state—“honeycombed,” as Mr Disraeli says, with conspiracy, and perfectly mined by Red Republicanism — would have defeated all my strategy. Genuine woman as she is, she'd have been in ecsta-

sies at the idea of such excitement. She'd have preferred a barricade to a new bonnet any day; and, womanlike, would have confronted the worst perils of a mob for the mere pleasure of one day recounting them. Were I to say, therefore, The revolution may break out next week, it would only add speed to her lest she should arrive too late.

To assure her, as I now in all truthfulness do you, my bland reader, that the cheapness of the Continent was all sham and delusion, would have provoked the less logical than practical reply, "No worse for me than for you, Mr O'Dowd." I might be taken suddenly ill and die—I mean, to have my death reported to her. There was much to be said in favour of this course, but Mrs O'Dowd was a woman of strong measures. She might remarry, and the complication become troublesome. I had just finished 'Enoch Arden,' and had no ambition to appear in that now popular part.

Torn with opposing conflicting thoughts, I paced my room in a state of almost frenzied perplexity, when the thought struck me, I shall go back to Ireland—I am wanted there suddenly. There is to be a great Art Exhibition of Irish products next May, and am not I one of them? It is important to see how many cubic feet they may be able to accord me—in what section I am to stand—how

I am to be illuminated when they show me by gaslight.

“Mrs O’Dowd,” I telegraphed at once, “tell the committee that I agree. I am doing wonders for the Exhibition here, and will be in Dublin by Tuesday—Friday at farthest. Show this to Guinness.

“O’Dowd.”

If that was not enough to puzzle ordinary brains, I’m a Belgian ! I pictured to my mind Mrs O’Dowd’s face of embarrassment as she asked whether I was to be an “Object of industry” or one of “the fine arts”?

Such, *intelligente publico*, is my present condition. I make the explanation in all frankness, so that if—which will be much more matter of regret to me than to you—if, I say, I should fail to make my appearance before you next month, you will neither believe the stories in circulation that I have been hanged in Poland or murdered in an English railway; that I am under sentence of bigamy, convicted of felony, or a major-general in the Federal army of America. I am simply preparing myself—as certain English noblemen are said to do for their appearance as Irish Viceroy—by a course of *poses plastiques*, which being accomplished, I resume my O’Dowderies, expecting the continuance of your gracious and most gratifying approval.

FROM TURIN TO ROME VIA FLORENCE.

THERE was a little French *vaudeville* which, some years ago, used to amuse the audiences of the Palais-Royal, and send them home laughing as they went over its drolleries. It was called 'Le Voyage à Dieppe.' The chief incidents of the piece revolved round a long-promised trip to Dieppe, which a Parisian shopkeeper had bound himself to make, to show his family the sea. It had become the day-dream of their lives, and no subject could be discussed amongst them without its reference to Dieppe being duly weighed and considered.

The happy day at last arrives, and they start. It was before the time of railroads. A malicious friend has, however, bribed the coachman, and instead of taking the road to Dieppe, he passes the whole night in driving round Paris, and ends by depositing the weary and exhausted travellers at a small suburb,

where, from the window of a mean-looking little inn, a tolerably extensive pond can be descried, duck-weeded and dreary, the distance being closed by a low-lying swamp. Whatever disappointments the others may feel, the honest Bourgeois himself will admit of none, and he throws wide his window and exclaims, "Ah, que c'est beau de voir le mer!" and bursts forth with an apostrophe to the ever-restless sea that would have done honour to a Greek chorus. He rushes out to the beach to inhale the invigorating breezes of the ocean, and comes back with an appetite for oysters, which he naturally imagines to be the appropriate effect of sea-air.

His enthusiasm and his blunders, his ecstasy and his mistakes, make up a most laughable picture, and all the time the audience can never perfectly divest themselves of a certain sympathy for one who, if he had really seen the sea, would have hailed the sight with such a racy and honest enjoyment.

Now, you will perhaps wonder what it was that could have reminded me of this little bygone piece, and, in this age of prolific farce-writing, could have carried me back to the glories of some fifteen years ago. I will tell you. 'Le Voyage à Dieppe' was brought forcibly to my mind by the new Franco-Italian Treaty. It is said to be among the prerogatives of kings to avail themselves of all the varied

acquirements of their subjects; and here we have the great Emperor of France not disdaining to take a hint as to his policy from a *vaudevilliste* of the "Palais." The new treaty may be briefly summed up thus: Within two years the French army is to be withdrawn from Rome. The Pope is to be left to his own devices, but Victor Emmanuel is not to molest him. A secret article, it is alleged, says that, to give his Holiness a stronger assurance of his safety, the Italians are to transfer the capital to Florence, and in this way recognise the fact that they are not to continue their pretensions to Rome, nor perpetuate the popular impulse to seize on the Eternal City.

Here is the 'Voyage à Dieppe.' Here are the poor Italians thirsting for Rome, as the Bourgeois thirsted for the sea, promising it to themselves and their wives and daughters these three years back. Here they're driven round and round all night, and landed at last at Florence, that wily cabman, Louis Napoleon, as he wipes his forehead, asking them if they're not satisfied with the way he drove them, and half hinting that a little token of their gratitude would not be ill-timed or ill-thought-of.

A few, it is true, grumble that this is not Dieppe, and protest that the swampy pond of stagnant water is not the sea; but the majority overbear them, and ask who can know the place better than the coach-

man ? He has pronounced that this is the spot they ought to be in, and of course none can gainsay him.

If it was not that the *vaudevilliste* was before the Emperor, I should call the policy a grand stroke of genius ; and, after all, plagiarism only diminishes and does not destroy the merit. Nothing short of genius, perhaps, could have adapted a practical joke to a nation, and turned the laugh against twenty-two millions of people. To tell them coolly, "Book yourselves, ladies and gentlemen ; the coach is just ready to start : any passengers for Rome ?" and then, just as coolly, to draw up on the Arno, and say "Here you are ! step out ;" and while they are straining their eyes to see the Coliseum or St Peter's, he dryly says, "It's a nice place, and you'll like it when you're used to it."

Geography, happily, is no requirement of a patriot. I remember, some years ago, hearing a very impassioned and even eloquent man addressing a crowd of people on the subject of the Bourbon cruelties in Sicily. Gladstone was mild compared to his descriptions of prison enormities ; and he described instruments of torture with a refinement of horror that Alexandre Dumas himself might have envied. In the very climax of his eloquence, however, he turned abruptly towards me, a perfect stranger as I was, and in a voice of most insinuating eagerness said, "*Scusi*,

Signor; ma dov' e la Sicilia ?”—Excuse me, sir ; but where is Sicily ?

Some one may have told the anecdote—perhaps I myself—to the Emperor ; for certainly he has been trading boldly on this want of Italian education.

If there was no small cleverness in thus dealing with the people, the Emperor has shown fully as much adroitness in his treatment of the Pope. “When at Rome,” says the adage, “do as the Romans ;” and he has followed the precept to the letter. He knew that one of the most distinctive traits of the Church, in its dealings with the wicked, is a most sensitive regard for human frailty. The Church, in fact, accepts humanity for what it is, not what it might be, and gently condoles with sinners over their shortcomings, blandly hinting that a little virtue now and then, taken as what doctors call “an alterative,” rather benefits the constitution and contributes to longevity. That there should, however, be no shock to the system—nothing revulsive in the treatment—the Church issues what it calls indulgences—short leases of loose living, renewable sometimes on lives for ever ; and by means of these, people may experiment whether they can or cannot divest themselves of the especial wickednesses which have hitherto made their lives so agreeable.

In this spirit has the Emperor decreed two years

shall elapse before he withdraws from Rome. For two entire years his Holiness has got a plenary of every abuse of what Lord Palmerston called "the worst Government of Europe." For two years may the people be crushed with taxation, sunk in barbarism, and degraded by superstition. For two years De Merode may nurse his Brigands and baptise his Jews; and for two years may the wily Antonelli rig the market and gamble on the Stock Exchange. To the Pope, two years more of unrestrained malversation and misrule may seem short. Sitting there on a seat where these have been the privileges ratified by centuries of use, he may be disposed to think that this proceeding is almost summary; but I doubt if the Romans take this view of the case; and I rather suspect, if the truth were known, that they would prefer the "Plenary" should be shorter, and his Holiness obliged to take to responsible habits a little earlier than the year 1866.

It has been long since evident that Italy could not go on as she has done. She must either go back or go forward; either go on to completion and real "Unity" by annexing Rome and Venice, or be satisfied to see the kingdom broken up and resolved into its former elements, or something resembling them.

This necessity all public men in Italy have frankly and freely recognised. It was not merely that the

machinery of Government was working with a degree of wear and friction that destroyed half its power, but that, to keep up the steam, they were driven to burn whatever they could lay hands on, no matter how valuable or costly.

Italy was maintaining in her armed peace a force so far above her means, that war itself would have been less burdensome. As Austria was playing exactly the same game, the ruinous policy was not alone displayed in heavy imposts and a grinding taxation, but in the stagnation of trade consequent on inimical feeling and bad relations, in frontiers all but closed, and customhouses very little short of fortresses.

A system so injurious to both, as much the enemy of civilisation as of national wealth, could not fail to attract the attention of men of enlightenment both in Austria and Italy; and it was remarked that in the two countries expressions had fallen from men of mark and station, indicating that the time was not, perhaps, very distant when Italians and Austrians might discover with what benefit they could be friends—how naturally their geographical position disposed to relations of trade and commerce, and how evident it was that a strong alliance of the two States would be one of the very strongest possible guarantees of European peace. When an able Eng-

lish diplomatist once suggested such a policy as the true one for Italy, based of course on the assumption that Austria would cede Venice to Italy, there was scarcely a man in Piedmont could comprehend what he meant. Now the policy makes converts every day. Men see that the French protection is the severest slavery that can be endured by a people. Men learn at last that French assistance, even when lent for "an idea," is the costliest compact that a nation can make. France has strengthened Italy, because she wants or may want her. Now an Austro-Italian league, had it been possible, would not have entailed any such demands.

The policy of France was, however, always to prevent this good understanding, and to this end she managed always to put Austria in "the wrong,"—a matter never very difficult with a country which, since the death of Metternich, has fallen into the hands of the very smallest capacities of Europe.

So effectually did France play this game, and so thoroughly did she know how to play it, that when, at the moment of the outbreak of the last war in Lombardy, Cavour was disposed to break the peace the first, the Emperor interfered and said, "No; Austria must be placed in the position of the disturber of European peace: leave it to me, and she shall be."

Now, I have only gone back on these events to remind you that France has always pursued the policy of sowing distrust between the two countries ; nor is there any "accommodation" in all Europe would so derange her plans and damage her interests as an honest and loyal good feeling between Austria and Italy. I will not affect to say that the matter is easy to bring about, or that it would not require, not alone great ability, but time ; but I will say this, that it was the intention of Cavour himself to have attempted it ; and had he lived and done so, I am equally certain he would not have failed.

Symptoms of such a possible change in Europe are, however, not wanting even now ; and I repeat, men of note and ability are disposed to think that by this union there would be for Italy at least two great and palpable advantages—a freedom from dependence on France, and, what is at this moment all-essential, a possibility of diminishing her war expenditure.

The Emperor of the French is, however, not to be "countermarched" now as he had been four years ago by Cavour ; he is up and stirring. By the Franco-Italian treaty, jealousy and distrust between Austria and Italy are re-established. Every one is alarmed, and no one secure.

By stipulating that Italy shall exchange Turin for

Florence as a capital, he alarms all those who believed that, with whatever change might come, they should "go to Rome;" and now, by insisting on Florence, they see, or think they see, an abdication of this great claim.

By announcing a withdrawal of the French army from Rome, he menaces the Pope with anything that his subjects may have in store for him. By the condition that non-intervention is for the future to be maintained, he declares that he will not permit Austria to come in; and thus in one brief, very brief, document he proclaims that nothing in the Peninsula is to be settled—nothing assumed as permanent. What he may, can, or shall do in the future, is open to him in any shape, and to any extent. He may sustain the temporal power, or abolish it—he may unite Italy, or subdivide it; and as for Austria, he may maintain her in Venetia, and talk of the sanctity of treaties, or he may, and most probably will, proclaim the "*solidarité* of peoples," whatever that may be, and make war against Venice. Meanwhile the Imperial policy has had a great success. It has made Victor Emmanuel unpopular in the city where he was once adored; it has rendered the government of Italy a matter of the most extreme difficulty; and it has made the Pope's rule all but impossible!

We might think that he must be a great intellect who could work all these mighty results, if we did not remember that a very small pinch of white arsenic would spoil the largest basin of turtle. For the present I do not believe he has any fixed intentions; he has simply upset the chess-table, and while they are picking up the pieces he'll decide on his game.

The whole of the Napoleon policy in Europe seems based on an imitation of that well-known member of the Turf, who left a false betting-book on his dressing-table, and thus led every one that trusted it to back the wrong horses. Nobody ever yet knew on what horse *he* stood to win. He may at this moment be hedging against Victor Emmanuel, or secretly deciding to "scratch" the Pope.

He is even capable of bringing out that dark horse Austria, and declaring her the favourite when all the matches are made.

That the Italians have any especial reason for rejoicing, I certainly do not see. Florence is no more Rome than fleas are lobsters.

When a poor countryman of mine—how invariably it is an Irishman has to be brought in when one would illustrate the law's oppression!—was once bound over to keep the peace towards all her Majesty's subjects, he left the office exclaiming,

“Well, then, God help the first furrener I meet with !”

This is now pretty much Victor Emmanuel’s case. He has given heavy bail that he won’t touch the Pope—but God help the Austrians !

Really, for my own part, I do not believe all this “circular sailing” will ever bring the King to the Vatican ; nor do I imagine, if he did get there, that the Italians would reap all the advantages that they promise themselves. The Japanese, it is true, manage to have two Emperors—a Spiritual and a Temporal one—but no European State has yet tried the experiment ; and perhaps, after all, it could only succeed in a country where the “happy despatch” is a national usage, and where, when you cannot get rid of the Government, you get rid of yourself.

SERVANTS.

WE have had lately in our newspapers a great deal of nonsense—some of it very good-natured nonsense—about servants, averring that their faults are rather the consequences of ill-judging and inconsiderate treatment by their masters, and that, as a class, they are amiable, honest, sober, affectionate, and grateful; and that the social reformation required would be to treat them with greater deference to their wishes, accord them more liberty, freer time for recreation, and, in general, a higher regard and consideration.

Where the people who write in this fashion met with their phoenix of a butler, or that black swan their cook, I don't know; but my own suspicion is, that the glowing eulogiums I have quoted were the experiences of those who only knew servants in their friends' houses, and approved of them as they did of

his claret or his pheasants, or any things that were his.

My experiences are certainly all the other way, and, next to sickness, I look upon servants as the greatest infliction of humanity; and there is no quality I so much envy the rich man, as in the fact that his wealth removes him to such a distance from their contact, that he knows next to nothing of their tempers or habits, and is never by any accident involved, as poorer men are doomed to be, in their private jealousies, hatreds, and utter uncharitableness.

In the first place, it is only fairly natural and reasonable that they should be sources of discomfort and annoyance, rather than of satisfaction and ease. Their whole life is a sort of lie. They are peasants thinly lackered with a very dubious sort of civilisation—that is, they catch up a faint semblance of what they see in the drawing-room, to enact it below stairs to the accompaniment of their native coarseness and barbarism.

If we are to trust to what old people say, they were better formerly—that is, better before they had penny journals and illustrated absurdities. This is not impossible. There is a sort of feudalism in the principle of the family that works all the better when distinctions of class are well marked; and

once the maids begin to read 'Eleanor's Victory,' and 'Lost and Saved,' and discuss the characters with the "young ladies," discipline is endangered, and very seriously too.

I like an ignorant valet, and a butler who has to spell out his newspaper. I sleep soundly when I know Jeames is not rummaging my letters, and picking up details for my biography out of my writing-desk. Give me a butler who keeps his cellar-book, as Robinson Crusoe kept his almanack, on a notched stick! It is a comfort to me to think that my Review or my Magazine is not thumbed by Mr "Fag," or that my missing Quarterly has not to be sought for in the housekeeper's room. Every lawyer and every doctor knows what a serious influence it would have on his professional success if it got abroad that he was greatly addicted to the basoon, or very fond of shuttlecock, or much given to charades and small plays. People would say, How can Mr So-and-so be possibly engaged in the serious work of his profession with such tastes as these? Are these the habits that indicate deep thought or grave reflection? And if this be true as to men whose education and training are all favourable to versatility, what are we to say to a class singularly limited in their range of knowledge, and almost one-idea'd on every subject, indulging in discursiveness?

We want concentration, and how do we seek to provide it? By everything that distracts attention and disperses thought. Jeames has to do with lamps and decanters—he is a creature of spoons and finger-glasses and lap-dogs—and we want to make him a subscriber to the ‘Saturday Review’ and a reader of Bulwer Lytton. Surely this is absurd. You would be afraid to trust your interests to a lawyer who had a passion for fossils, and passed much of his time in his laboratory; and yet you are quite ready to concede all the privileges of varied pursuits to a creature whose highest day-dream should never rise beyond a coal-scuttle, and who, instead of unrolling a mummy, should be folding a napkin.

Domestic service is a profession, and to follow it well, the fewer distractions a man has the better. If I see the butler with the ‘Times’ in his hand, I am prepared to find the claret shaken; if I see Jeames with ‘Bell’s Life,’ I understand at once why my boots are lacking in lustre. Try a free press on board of a man-of-war, and see how much discipline you will get; and yet a household must be ruled pretty much like a ship. You want promptitude, activity, exactness, and obedience; and how much of these are you to expect from a set of creatures puffed up with the self-importance of a mistaken status, their

heads turned with all the projects an ill-judging philanthropy has devoted to them, and full of Penny Journalism and 'Once a Week'-erie?

Alphonse Karr tells us that from the moment he furnished a house he ceased to be an independent creature. "From that hour," said he, "my chairs and tables that I thought *I* owned, owned *me*. They were the masters of my whole destiny, and *my* duty it was to see that they met no ill-treatment, were not scratched, smashed, nor abused." So it is with servants. You want to have a butler, for instance. Have you ever stooped to give your nearest friend such a thorough account of your life and habits, have you ever made such a confession of your tastes and tempers, as to this Priest of the Sideboard? How many months you pass in the country, how long you reside in town? Where do you go for a watering-place, and when? What are your habits of hospitality? Do you give dinners, and what sort of dinners? What wine is your usual drink? You narrate your hour of rising and retiring to rest, and you fill up a full sketch of your private history: but how often, notwithstanding all the insidious flatteries you insert about the ways of the family, "White Choker" is obdurate! He is not used to gentlemen who drink sherry, or go to Har-

rowgate, or dine early—he deplores the hard necessity of refusing you, but he sees that you would never hit it off together, and he retires, leaving you to go over the same details to another “gentleman” then waiting in the hall.

I am the most long-suffering and patient of men—friends who know me intimately call me Job; but I own that scenes like this—and I have gone through some scores of them—have whitened my whiskers and threatened me with apoplexy.

The truth is, what between our listless laziness and self-indulgence, we have surrendered our lives to a set of insolent rascals, who have contrived to exact the very highest rate of pay for the very smallest modicum of service.

Why can modern mechanical genius do nothing for us? Oh for a steam butler and a self-acting housemaid! Oh for a cook that a man could wind up like an eight-day clock, and never think of till the end of the week!

Take my word for it, the fellow who makes your toast or fills out your madeira has more of your daily happiness in his keeping than it is at all pleasant to acknowledge; and to elevate him to a position where this mastery becomes a tyr-

anny is as repugnant to good sense as to good economy.

I am ready to subscribe for an asylum for all ill-treated and ruined masters to-morrow, but for a "Flunkies' Home" I'll give never a sixpence.

REFORMATORIES.

I AM not, so far as I know myself, one who takes a gloomy view of human nature. After more experience of life than happens usually to most men of my age—which shall be set down at anything you like medieval—I am led to regard humanity on the whole as a better thing than I thought it on first acquaintance.

I have found the same to be the result of the experience of nearly every thorough “man of the world” I have ever questioned on the matter. Let me not be misunderstood. I am no warm believer in what is called progress. If the world be better than it used to be, it is in some such inappreciable quality that is of no value, just as astronomers tell us we are so many hundreds of thousands of miles nearer the sun than at some remote era—a matter that, so far as the consumption of coals is

concerned, the most economical householder will scarcely rejoice over. We are better pretty much as we are healthier. There are a few old maladies that we have learned to treat more skilfully, and some two or three new ones have dropped down on us that are puzzling us sorely.

I think the most hopeful thing to say of us is, that we do not grow worse with age; and the more I think of it, I deem this no small praise.

But apart from all this question of progress, I think well of the world. I think there is a great deal of kindness, a great deal of generosity, and a great deal of tenderness in human nature—ay, and in quarters, too, where one would not look for it—grains of gold in rock that had not a single feature of quartz. Any one who has looked closely at life, will tell you how struck he has been by the daily spectacle of small sacrifices, small concessions, he has witnessed. The tender, uncomplaining, untiring care of a sick child; the devotion that did not alone become an office of love, but grew into the whole business of life; the high-couraged submission of a poor suffering wife or mother, bearing bravely up under pain, to make one in a family where her empty chair would be a gloom and a sadness; the weary man of toil throwing off his care at his door, that his tired brow should not cast a shadow on the

bright circle round the hearth. If I have called these small sacrifices, it is not from disparagement. I only mean to distinguish them from the great heroic efforts which have the world for an audience, and of which I am not thinking just now, and which, be it remarked, as they cost more effort, are also, from that very reason, supplied with more force from within the heart of him who makes them, than these little daily demands on time, temper, and endurance.

On the whole, I am satisfied that the good preponderates largely over the bad. Ay, and I even believe that people are very often better than they know themselves; that is to say, capable of sacrifices and of self-denials to an extent which, having never been called for, they would deem impossible.

Now, it was necessary I should declare this opinion of mine thus broadly before I assert what is my object at this writing—that, well as I think of humanity in the gross, I have the very smallest and shallowest faith in what are called “Reformatories,” and I implicitly believe that they are as flagrant failures as are to be found in this grand era of soap-bubbles.

First of all, crime of every sort—and I take the word crime, as I desire to speak of prisons and prisoners—crime, I say, stands, with respect to the moral man, in relation very closely resembling what

disease presents to the physical man, an abnormal condition, proceeding from a complication of causes, partly structural, partly accidental, and largely from a due want of that care, abstention, and self-control required to restrain men from doing what impulse suggests, but right reason and judgment would repudiate.

Disease is not more varied in its aspect than crime, for crime takes its characteristics from all the circumstances which fashion and mould disease. The individuals vary in all the different shades that age, sex, habit, training, physical conformation, passions, and temptations can impress. The agile youth who has stolen your watch is not a bit like the muscular scoundrel that broke open your plate-chest, or the oily, smiling villain who forged your acceptance; and yet these three men, sentenced and imprisoned, would be subjected to exactly the same reformatory discipline. Now, what would we say of the doctor who treated a sprained ankle, a dropsy, and an apoplexy by the same remedies, ignoring all consideration of both patient and disease, and simply regarding him as a sick man?

Prisoner or patient, there is the discipline you must undergo. Why, Morrison's pills or Mr Somebody's ointment is nothing to this! Let us be fair to the quacks in physic. They almost all of them insist upon a long course of their peculiar panacea,

and in the letters of testimony that they publish we constantly read, "I have now been taking your invaluable drops for upwards of thirty years;" whereas the reformatory people turn out their cases in three, six, or twelve months, and a housebreaker goes out a cleansed leper, strong from the dietary, and vigorous in the ethics of prison discipline.

Now, I'll not enter upon the far too wide field of the immense liabilities to deception, the prisoner being as constitutionally a hypocrite as a thief; but I will return to my illustration, and ask, What would be said of the physician who only intervened when cases were all but hopeless, who had little to suggest for prevention, but kept all his science for those *in extremis*?

There was once on a time a very charitable lady in Ireland, Lady L—— C——, who established a refuge for her fallen sisters; and when one morning a fine fresh bright-eyed young girl, ignorant of the nature of the asylum, presented herself for admission, the patroness, deeply compassionating so young a victim, proceeded to ask the circumstances of her "fall," and, to her astonishment, discovered that she was no derelict from virtue at all, but perfectly pure and innocent. "Ah, then, we cannot receive you, my dear child," said her Ladyship; "you must go and qualify."

Here is the essence of the whole reformatory system. The hard-worked poor man, wearied with labour and crazed with rheumatism, has no interest for you. You have no counsels, no encouragements, no wise precepts for him. He may fag his weary way through life without one word to cheer him ; he may plod on to the grave unnoticed and unaided : but let him only steal a loaf, or knock over a rabbit, straightway is he dear to you. Then has he gone and “qualified,” and at once all the stores of reforming tenderness are opened to him, and hopes and promises, which in the days of his integrity he had never heard of, now shower down upon his head, an ill-doer and a criminal.

Reformation almost invariably begins from within. It is the result of a reasoning process by which the individual arrives at the conclusion that he will be healthier, or richer, or more long-lived, or something or other, than he would wish to be, if he were to abjure this and adopt that.

For the most part, men make these reformations in pure deference to public opinion. They argue somewhat thus :—There is an impression abroad that theft is immoral. Men have built up an arbitrary system of what they call property ; and though I am persuaded it is a narrow-minded unbrotherly view to take of human nature, yet as I am in the minority, I

succumb, and for the future I will work instead of rob. I don't mean to say I like it, but the odds are so terribly against me in the one case, that after mature deliberation I accept the other.

Now, when honesty is said to be the best policy, it is a mere trick to say that it is best in the sense of worldly advantage. It is best on grounds of morality—best in whatever regards man's highest and greatest interests ; but that it is best with respect to mere success in life, I totally deny. He would be a shameless man who would venture to declare such a proposition in this age of railroad-jobbing and joint-stock swindle. It would be invidious to give examples near home ; but look at the men around the French Emperor. Look at M——, and W——, and P——, and a score more—a mere set of from-hand-to-mouth adventurers a few years ago, and now amongst the richest men in Europe ! Look at the ex-minister in Italy, with his railroad scheme jobbed at the price of a quarter of a million sterling. But why take examples ? Simply ask yourself, Is it amongst the rigidly scrupulous, the strictly fair-dealing section of your acquaintances, you would seek for the men who are likely to make great success in life ?

The fact is, the pursuit of money has all the characteristics of a grand *chasse*, and the men of consols

and shares have an ardour fully as high, and a courageous daring not a whit inferior to that felt by the fox-hunter or the deer-stalker; and neither have time enough to be scrupulous. What a man does every day not merely enlists his sympathies and engages his interests, but blunts his susceptibilities as to its effect on others. He looks upon it as a thing that must be; and I have no doubt that your great Rothschilds regard "Dividends" as a part of the universal scheme fully as confidently as they trust the earth will go round the sun.

Now, as heavenly bodies have their aberrations, so will earthly ones; and men enlisted in any pursuit which engrosses them deeply are more prone to become gamblers than they know of.

I remember here an anecdote a very dear old friend once told me. He was rector of a parish in the north of Ireland, where, from the habits of the Scotch Church prevailing largely, it is not unusual to find some two or three men taking rank and place amongst the congregation, and assuming, with the Episcopalians, somewhat the character of elders in the other community.

One of these, a man of hitherto unblemished integrity, had been accused of some sharp practice in money-dealing, and the case was reported to the rector. My friend sent for the man, narrated the

charge, and anxiously asked, Could it be possible that such an imputation could attach to him?—"for," said he, "I have refused to credit it, Mathew, nor shall I, till you yourself declare to me it is true."

"And it is, your reverence," said he, submissively, and much sorrow-stricken; "it is just true, and there's no denyin' it! But," added he, with an effort, "it's unco hard to be 'in Grace' in the flax season."

Now, I take it, most of us have our "flax seasons." But where have I left my reformatories all this time? Let me go back to them.

Let us take the case of the thief. Theft, like gambling, indisposes a man to any laborious effort to earn his livelihood. The fellow who can by a stroke of address provide himself with a week's or perhaps a month's subsistence, will certainly feel no vocation for hard work simply because it is an honest calling.

Now, when we tell such a man that honesty is the best policy, he says, "With all my heart; follow it if you like; but I like my own system better." If he comes, however, to see that he is usually found out, and that each new discovery heightens his punishment, and that at last the fight against the law is unequal, if he be a fellow of any wit, he will address himself to another handicraft; but it is neither you

nor your system that has reformed him. It is simply the man himself, who, having some experience of life, has learned that roguery doesn't pay. Nor is it easy for him to come to this conclusion, no more than it was easy for the justice, who sentenced him, to give up snuff, or the justice's clerk to abandon gin-and-water.

If the thief's experiences are, however, more rose-coloured—if he has dodged the law successfully for a number of years, and only been “ nabbed ” by an accident, and slightly sentenced—take my word for it you'll not reform him, no more than you will persuade that bland old gentleman with the rubicund nose to give up port, or the thin man in spectacles beside him to forswear short whist. Make vice unprofitable—that is, make crime, so far as you can, certain of detection—and then, you will reform criminals. As to your persuasive efforts, your orderly habits, your wise precepts, &c., I never trust them the day after their exercise has ceased. You cure for the time, but you can't prevent the relapse.

I remember hearing, once on a time, of a certain great meeting held in Dublin, to hear the report of a committee on the subject of the conversion of the Jews. The substance of the report was so far favourable, that several Jews had been brought to embrace Christianity; but here came the drawback: it was

always found that when the efforts of the controversialist had ceased, and the convert was pronounced safe, he had invariably gone back again to his old belief.

This was disheartening, certainly ; and while the meeting was in the act of deploring such a calamity, a young naval officer, who happened to be present, observed that he had within his own experience one case, which certainly gave a more cheery aspect to the question, and with their permission he would be glad to relate it. It was, of course, very interesting to obtain testimony, and from a quarter so unlooked for, and he was politely requested to mount the platform and address the meeting.

After a brief apology for his deficiencies as an orator, he related how it happened that once he was in command of a small sloop of war at the mouth of an African river, whose banks were inhabited by a colony of Jews, a race of most strange and mysterious origin, but yet to be found there. Amongst these there was one, a very venerable-looking old fellow, who supplied the sloop with yams and sweet potatoes, and such other produce ; "and with him," said the officer, "I had frequent discussions, some of them on religious topics. He interested me at last to that degree that I began to wish I could convert him, though really, from my ignorance of polemics, I did

not know exactly how to set about it; and at the same time I was discouraged by hearing that, of the supposed converts made by missionaries on the coast, there was not one who had not relapsed.

“While I thus hesitated and pondered, I received sudden orders to sail. I went on shore to settle some matters of the ship’s accounts, and seeing that Moses was on board, I offered him a passage in my gig, to have a few last words with him. We started a religious discussion at once; but I found my friend, long trained to argue with the missionaries, rather more than my match. He knew far more than I did, and employed his knowledge more skilfully. In my embarrassment I grew angry. I was foiled so often that my men had hard work to keep from laughing, and this overcame me completely. So I just seized him by the collar and chucked him into the sea; and after keeping him down for a second or two, I said, ‘Will you be a Christian now?’

“‘No,’ said he—‘never.’ Down he went again, and for a little longer, when I asked, ‘Will you now?’

“‘No,’ said he, ‘for nothing on earth.’

“I put him under again, ladies and gentlemen; and, I am obliged to own, I kept him almost a minute, so that when he did come up he was very red in the face, and nearly suffocated.

“‘What do you say now? Will you be a Christian?’

“‘Yes,’ said he, with a gulp.

“‘Then you shan’t relapse anyway,’ said I; and so, ladies and gentlemen, I put him down again, and held him there quite long enough to prevent accidents; and that was the only Jew I ever heard of who didn’t recant.”

The lieutenant may have been unlucky; but are we more fortunate in our experiences of the “ticket-o’-leavers” who are the prize-men of our jails? Are not the convictions we daily read of, all, or nearly all, of men well known to the police—“old offenders”?

The almost certainty of detection is your true reformer. Show the thief that it “won’t pay.” Let the burglar learn that housebreaking, like landlordism, has its responsibilities, ay, and that they are sure to be imposed; and when you have done this, the profession will become unpopular.

Strengthen your police and scrutinise your magistrates, and, take my word, you may practise a wise economy in jail-reformers and prison-disciplinists; and if, besides this, you make jails uncomfortable, there will be no more to do than “rest and be thankful.”

SOME PROS AND CONS OF LIFE ABROAD.

EVER since that letter of Mrs O'Dowd's asking me for the name of the town abroad where, with an exquisite climate and a charming society, one can live for half nothing, I have been revolving in my mind the delusions of the people who come abroad for cheapness.

Some years ago, doubtless, the Continent was cheap—one reason, and a great one, of the cheapness being, that you consented to live abroad without many things you would have judged to be indispensable at home ; and so, instead of a house, you lived in part of one. In lieu of a regular establishment, your household consisted of two or three “grand utilities ;” and your butler was a hairy rascal, who cleaned the windows, polished the *parquet*, and very possibly *coifféd* your wife. You slept on sackcloth, and ate out of earthenware ; and the only bit of carpet in your salon

warmed the legs of a small round table in the middle of the room, upon which, under a glass bell, stood a miniature tea-service.

All these were very cheap enjoyments, but would you have had them at any price in your own country? Of late, however, the Continent, except in some remote and little-visited spots, has become pretty much like England, and the consequence is, just as dear.

Paris is far more costly as a residence than London, St Petersburg double Paris, and Vienna about half-way between the two. Madrid is expensive, but it does not much matter—nobody would live there who was not paid for it.

Brussels is fast treading on the heels of Paris in point of expense ; Rome is twice as costly as it was ten years ago ; and so, too, might we say of Florence. Dresden is dearer also : and now I am at the end of places to live in ; for as to Geneva and the Rhine towns, I have no sympathy with those who inhabit them, or a word of counsel to give them. The best cities to sojourn in are Paris and Rome. They are richer in objects of interest, more varied in aspect, and broader socially ; and, for the latter reason, there is more personal independence than elsewhere. In speaking thus, I reject all considerations of government and administration. I have tried a great many

governments, and I never found one too bad to live under. I am sure they did not abandon the knout during my visit to Moscow, and I strongly suspect that the Pope would have kidnapped a Jew child even while I prolonged my stay at Rome ; but I can aver with a safe conscience I was never molested by either Cossack or Cardinal ; and I came away from each of these places with a whole skin and an uninvaded faith. The smaller cities are not, it is true, devoid of social freedom ; but, of course, there is more gossip, more neighbourly comment, than in wider circles. They are certainly cheaper too ; that is, all fortunes are smaller, and the life of the highest class is no question of tens of thousands.

I have passed so much of my life abroad that I only take my home statistics from what my friends are so good as to tell me, and what I can glean from books and newspapers. From these sources I am led to conclude that there is very little difference in cost between England and the Continent generally ; and that if we were to draw out a scale of equivalents—taking London, for instance, to rank with Paris, Bath with Baden, Edinburgh with Berlin, and Dublin with, let us say, Grätz in Styria—we should find the cost of living pretty equal.

The great difference between life in England and life abroad I take to be, that in England our effort is

to do a great many things at the smallest possible cost ; and abroad, to do without one-half of them.

Money is such a standard with us in England, not alone of solvency, but of social claim and personal worth, that a man is continually on the watch lest he should be detected in an economy. He must be liberal in all subscriptions, a free giver in fifty ways, no matter by what petty pinchings at home he must readjust the balance of expenditure,—unless, indeed, he be very rich, when all his shortcomings will be set down to eccentricity. Be only eccentric in England, and there is nothing you may not do with impunity short of a murder.

Now, money abroad is only money. Do not imagine I say this disparagingly ; Cornelius O'Dowd has had too many experiences of the minus sign in his life's algebra to speak disrespectfully of the plus emblem ! I simply desire to say, that Continental people do not accept money as station, rank, education, good manners, and good connections ; and for this reason no part of a man's income need be devoted abroad to the object of "imposing." In a word, you may keep all your saltpetre to make gunpowder, and never spend an ounce of it in fireworks. And, oh dear, what fireworks do we let off socially at home ! What squibs and crackers of *déjeûners* and luncheons ! what Catharine-wheels of stupid dinners !

what Roman candles of routs and evening parties!—breaking our hearts and burning our fingers, all that our rockets may go up a little higher than our neighbours', and burst more gracefully!

I suspect that, at our very best, we are not a very social people, and we utterly swamp ourselves by overlaying all intercourse by costliness. We must eat that we may talk, and drink before we can laugh. They manage this better in France.

Twenty people can assemble of an evening where there may be a cup of tea, or, as often, some *eau sucrée*, and yet go home neither calling down the infernal gods on the host's shabbiness, nor inveighing against their own folly. They can come and go pleasantly, easily, and socially, discussing what there may be of passing interest, and not putting into mere light conversation that terrible earnestness that makes English small-talk like the discussion of a railway dividend; for it is true—unhappily, too—we neither understand light soup nor lighter small-talk. We put such a deal of substance into either, that when we have tasted we are filled.

Now, I ask, is there any excuse short of a fire would palliate a man dropping into a friend's house of an evening in England? For my own part, I should as soon think of sauntering down to the Old Bailey to pass an hour, as I would of calling upon

the man I know best in any capital of Great Britain. We have our set periods for company as we have for church, and we are just as solemn in the one as the other. The very fact that an amusement is inexpensive, stamps it with us as undesirable.

Now, apply these instincts to our lives abroad, and you will see that we do not derive from foreign sojourn those benefits of economy we go in search of. Not that we are too free-handed or too liberal—far from it. Our little facility of speech in the languages of the Continent inspires us with perpetual distrust, which we discount into shabbiness.

“We killed our goose” abroad, or we might have enjoyed golden eggs for many a year. We overdid cheapness. We showed the foreigner that we had come abroad for economy so palpably, as to imply that for no other possible consideration would we have consented to his company. Now, this was not civil, but it was worse, it was impolitic. We put “Mussoo” on his mettle to show us that, besides being fifty times as brilliant, Paris could be as costly as London; and the “confounded foreigner” took an especial pride in exhibiting the ‘rich Milor’ as one of the hardest bargainers and craftiest dealers of Europe.

The flood of Americans over the Continent of late years has raised the cost of living, and, what I like

even less, damaged us much as a nation—they are so constantly mistaken by foreigners for English. The effect is precisely like that produced in the mercantile world by some large issue of false scrip ; people grow frightened, and sell out of the concern altogether.

Over and over again has it been my fortune to hear severe comment on English habits, derived from an unlucky experience of the popular customs of Kansas, or “the last new thing in politeness” from Ohio. How vain to tell the German or the Italian that he had been imposed on—that he had not been dealing with the “Old House,” but with a new establishment of reckless traders, who, by puffing placards and lying advertisements, were trying to kidnap our customers !

False trade-marks are a terrible fraud in commerce, and we have suffered sorely of late years from those whom by some extraordinary figure of speech we call our Transatlantic cousins. When a well-known leader of the bar on an English circuit, presuming on the circumstance that he had begun life as a midshipman, once took upon him to return thanks at a public dinner for the toast of the navy, the explanation of a friend was, that he thought the word “navy” was spelt with a K. Now, if these connections of ours would allow us to call

them "Cozens," we might admit the relationship more easily.

Not that I include all Americans in this sweeping judgment, for there is a rough unvarnished Yankee that I like much. I like his self-reliance, his vigour, his daring earnestness, and I don't dislike his intense acuteness, and I forgive his ill-humour with England. It is your travelled Philadelphian, your literary gentleman from Boston, or your almighty swaggerer from Broadway, that I cannot stomach. This be-ringed and gold-chained ruminator is positively odious to me. His imitation of the usages of society is at once so close and so remote, as to afford a cruel mockery of our actual civilisation ; and I long to read my Darwin backwards, and fancy the time when he will go back to his native woods and prairies, and be as wildly fantastic and barbarous as Nature intended him. These people are not the nation ; they are not even like it. They are the offshoots of an over-wealthy and purse-proud society, who, not daring to exhibit their impertinences where they are known, come over to Europe to display themselves in all the extravagance of a mistaken culture.

"When a good American dies he goes to Paris," it is said ; and I am almost tempted to wish that some of them would wait for their immortality on their own side of the Atlantic.

Such people have helped to make the Continent dear, and done very little to make it pleasanter ; and next to these come Russians.

No man mourned the death of the late Emperor more sincerely than myself, for with him expired that admirable law which forbade Russians to leave their country without a formal and especial permission from the Czar himself. The Emperor was a wise man, and he thoroughly appreciated what the First Napoleon said about washing one's *sale ling*e at home. The present head of the nation has revoked the edict, and we have Scythians everywhere—in the Tuileries, in the Vatican, up Vesuvius, on Mont Blanc.

If the Russian be better “ plated ” than the American, the metal beneath is vastly inferior ; and once that the outward scale comes off, the vulgar material appears in all its atrocity ; and the most polished production from the banks of the Neva is little better than a naked savage with a gold snuff-box.

Where, with ingredients like these afloat, Mrs O'D. is to find her cheap and pleasant residence, is more than I know.

THE IRISH VICEROYALTY.

IN the name of all the Lords-in-Waiting, what is this balderdash they are getting up against the Irish Viceroyalty? Are the English habitually too kind to us—are we over-complimented in Parliament, or over-flattered in the Press? Are we too much distinguished by Court favour, or has the Chancellor of the Exchequer reserved for us any especial benefits in the Budget? In one word, have we so much that they will not leave us this—this one remnant that recalls a time when we used to fancy ourselves a people?

The great ground of attack limits itself to calling the Viceroyalty “a Mockery.” Now I certainly do not see this. Is the Viceroy more a mockery when deputed by her Majesty to represent her, than the Lord-Chancellor when he has been delegated to open or prorogue Parliament? It may be a more solemn

office, certainly, to convène Englishmen than to kiss Irish women ; but I think I can guess which is pleasanter. At all events, nobody can call it a mockery. I am not very sure what great substantial reality appertains to any Court ceremonial. I opine that there be many things in these displays that a chastened wisdom and a refined taste might demur to ; the reflex, therefore, need not be too closely scrutinised, nor too severely judged.

But take it to be a mockery, reduce it as low as you like in the category of reasonable things, we in Ireland like it : it amuses us ; we accept it, not perhaps as the best to have, but the best we can get ; and surely you might be pleased with our humility, even if you laugh at our childishness.

Half the things men attach value to in life are mere symbols—sometimes not very intelligible ones. Often are they types of what has passed away, never to return. Thus, for instance, the rich gold cord, the “*aiguillette*” of a general, was taken from a Flemish regiment which went into battle with the halter round their necks, so that, if defeated, they should be hanged ; and yet men are proud enough to display a decoration whose origin was certainly not flattering. Why, therefore, might not we Irish like to wear as an honour what was instituted as a penalty, and exhibit from pride what took its rise in repression ?

It is certainly not as a boon for our countrymen that we seek to maintain the office, since in four hundred years but seven Viceroys have been Irish. Not that I complain of this. I am well satisfied with the sort of men her Majesty has sent over to rule us. They have generally been men of mark; always distinctively impressed with the great traits of their great country.

These men, whatever their political leanings, have conferred great benefits upon us. They have displayed to our over-impulsive natures the spectacle of a more measured judgment, a calmer tone, a more patient spirit of inquiry into things new or difficult, than are to be found generally amongst ourselves; and I am certain that the personal characters of English Viceroys have done much to raise the estimate of England amongst all classes of Irishmen. The Viceroy was able to do what would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for any other. He could bring together at his table men the most antagonistic and opposed. These men, fierce enemies till they had met, learned to acquire in social intercourse a very different estimate of each other, and parted very frequently, if not friends, at least with sentiments of respect and esteem.

The violence of party is always in the inverse ratio of the squares of the distance it is exercised in;

and Dublin being so much narrower than London, men were proportionately more bitter in their dislikes. It was, then, an inestimable boon that there was one house in Ireland where men of opposing sides might sit down together, and learn, if not to settle their differences, to subdue their prejudices.

When, as was often the case, the Viceroy was a man of tact, the *rapprochement* was still more easily effected; and I could myself tell of changes of opinion acquired in this way, which a rash press and a rasher public ascribed to very different agency.

This, it may be said, is taking low ground for the defence, and I agree with you—but I do so in deference to the attack, since nothing could possibly be lower than that. I want the Viceroy to be maintained, as a dinner-giver the more, in a city which, hospitable as it is, is not over rich. I want a house where I can sit next the Grand-master, who drinks the Glorious and Immortal Memory, on one hand, and Father Cullen on the other. I want to dine as well as I could in Belgrave Square, with a far wittier and more genial society than all the squares for ten miles round Belgrave could compass. And more than all, I want to hear how an Englishman of mark and note, in the favour of his sovereign and the confidence of his party, thinks of us, and talks of us;

for let him be as reserved as he may, his judgment of Irishmen will ooze out as the claret goes round, and even his very concealments will have their significance.

Now, why grudge us this? Do you not every month of your life spend more money on that endless lawsuit of "*Armstrong versus Whitworth* and others" than would maintain a Viceroy for Ireland in double splendour? Is there a cupola ship changed to a broadsider, or an unserviceable three-decker converted into an impossible frigate, without costing the nation the charge of many Viceroys? Why, you expended more money t'other day in running away from the King of Dahomey than would have kept up the Irish Viceroy for ten years.

Mind, I do not affect to say that I want the Viceroy as a Governor in the same sense that you send one to India. I ask for him as a measure of that equality you are always pretending to extend to us, but never in reality confer. We have our Law-courts and our University; they are not necessarily shams because they are in Ireland. Why not have our Court-receptions also? It is not the Queen's pleasure to visit us. More's the pity; but when she does, let us not lose the habits which may fit us for her presence.

When the foreman of an Irish jury, in a case

where an English nobleman of large fortune was the defendant, was asked how the jury ever had the conscience to award such a sum in damages as forty thousand pounds? "It was a great deal, sure enough," he said, "but we all agreed it was a fine thing to bring all that money into Ireland."

Now, is it not a fine thing to bring five-and-twenty thousand annually into a city not overburdened with cash, and "take it out" afterwards in dinners and evening parties?

Look at it even as a normal school of politeness, and it has much in its favour. Imagine her Majesty coming over to Dublin and holding a levee, and not an alderman able to kneel down without "prostrating himself on his face," as a Lord Mayor called it; or a drawing-room where, as the same civic authority observed, "none of the ladies could advance backwards." Think of the distractions of Goldsticks and Bedchamber people at the untrained demonstrations of a very demonstrative people. It is but fair to let us have as much annual training as you accord to the Yeomanry.

Now, having said so much for retaining the office, a word for the man who is to hold it. There are two or three small changes I should like to suggest. First, I would abolish the privilege of knighting. No one, no matter how high his station, in a free

country, should have the power to make another man—even a Lord Mayor—ridiculous.

Secondly, I would do away with the kissing—we ought to do that for ourselves. To be sure, it is not all to the credit side of the Viceroy's book. There are now and then Celtic specimens of beauty in the shape of austere mothers that might make his Excellency doubt whether he had not better have remained in the "Colonies;" but he must take these with the lot.

This reminds me of what his Majesty George IV. said, as he saw a twinkle of malice in a waiting-lord's eye, when a very old and ill-favoured countess had just been submitted to the royal embrace. "Never mind," said the King, in a whisper, "I had my revenge; I kissed her daughter twice yesterday." I say, I'd do away with this, and I'd give a compensation—say two thousand a-year if the Viceroy was a young man, five if old! but in return I should insist on more dinners. Lastly, I would suggest that one-half of the gentlemen-in-waiting should be briefless barristers, the pleasantest class in the country, and well worthy of some sort of recognition.

Leave us, therefore, leave us what the Prussian calls our "Hegemony." I trust I am employing a decent expression, but I am not quite clear on the subject. Leave it to us, whatever it is, if it be good

for us ; don't despoil us of the small modicum of gold we used once to be so proud of when we had gingerbread ; and as you have deprived us of Donnybrook Fair, at least leave us our St Patrick's Ball.

If, however, it be the intention of our rulers to abolish the office, what could have induced them to mark its approaching extinction by naming Lord Carlisle to the post ? Why accompany its decline and fall by regrets all the more poignant ? Why join to the loss of certain material benefits the greater loss that attaches to the rupture of ties of affection and deep regard ? I have not been in Ireland since his Viceroyalty ; but I am told on all sides, and by men of all parties, such traits of his kindness, his generosity, and his goodness,—I have heard of such instances of his thoughtful benevolence, that I can feel what Ireland must have lost by his departure—a sorrow all the deeper from the cause that produced it.

If it be a policy to extinguish the Viceroyalty, Lord Carlisle should never have been amongst the last to hold it.

SCIENTIFIC CONGRESSES.

WHEN John Girder declared that whatever "was perfectly uneatable might be given to the poor," he enunciated the grand maxim of Scientific Congresses; these wonderful meetings of world-famed men being very little else than grand gatherings for the disposal of rejected articles. What the originators of such societies intended, what they meant or hoped for when they instituted them, is clear and clean beyond me. I never met yet the man who owned he had gleaned anything from their lucubrations. I never saw the woman who did not come away more conceited and self-opinionated from having frequented them. First of all, they are not congresses at all, for the discussional element in them is at the very lowest. When I have read my paper on the "Prismatic formation observable in maiden ladies of advanced years," another opens with a "Remarkable

phosphorescence in the eyes of sanguineous gentlemen, when they discuss the poor-rates;" but nobody disputes, nobody inquires into, nobody investigates these. A timid naturalist at the end of the room will perhaps hint that something or other in his own experience has not corroborated the learned gentleman's most interesting paper; but the President comes down at once with his vote of thanks, and there's a great clapping of hands and scraping of feet, and they all rise and go off to tea, "dreary companions, every one!"

The only bit of real cleverness I have ever detected in these "scientific" swells, is the choice of the place they meet in. I have not tested the fact by experiment, and therefore I am ready to offer an honest wager on it, that if you'll take up a census return, you'll always find that the place they select will have an overwhelming proportion of the female population.

In this way they are like the monks of old, who had an aptitude for a neat locality that has never been surpassed. If you place a civil engineer on the top of a mountain, he'll tell you very soon where there will be water, and generally, too, what direction the streams will run in; and I'd back a Scientific Congressite to hit off the spot where rooms full of green-veiled goddesses will be found, and where

the dreariest old chemists and archæologists will be fondled and fêted and pampered for ten days or a fortnight, as if they were Phaethons or Apollos.

This is the real secret of the whole thing; it is what the Cockneys call an out "outing." Mineralogy and comparative anatomy are dead beat with a hard lecturing season. They are not creatures who can take their holiday at Homburg and Wiesbaden. The musty odour of their daily pursuits does not overwell fit them for general society; and, besides, they have an eye to profit. They cherish the thought of all the little thoughtful attentions and politenesses they are certain to meet in the provinces. They have only to determine, then, the interesting scene of their labours, and all the rest "will be added to them." Let them receive ever so little, they are sure to give less. "The paper" they read has either been returned scores of times by some quarterly or monthly, or it is a dexterous synopsis of something they have done at more length elsewhere. Whenever it is original, take your oath on it it is utterly worthless. The coins the most lavish benevolence flung out of the carriage window never were guineas; and, indeed, for the mere pleasure of seeing the beggars fight for them, halfpennies sufficed just as well.

Now, I grudge no man his holiday. I have taken a great many myself in life, and always found them

agree with me; neither do I grudge him the society of those who deem him agreeable or amusing; so that, if these learned Smellfunguses think this to be the appropriate mode of spending the long vacation, I have not a word against it. I only protest against my being obliged to believe that this is done in the interest of science. This I will not swallow.

That he who reads, and he who is waiting to read after him, may like it, I consent to. That going out about in great hives may be pleasant to the old drones who do it, I concede; that Bath, or Leamington, or Tunbridge, or any semi-detached-from-civilisation little place, may feel its importance increased by playing host to red-sandstone people and beetle-gatherers, is all intelligible enough; only, again I say, don't ask me to accept this as scientific. You may talk till your hoarse, but I'll not believe "these crusts to be mutton."

Popularising science, as it is called, is like playing whist for nothing. No man ever learned *that* way, take my word for it; but there is a worse feature in the affair than all this. We English are a very routine people, and our newspapers give a very truthful indication of the jog-trot regularity of our lives. From February to July we live on politics; from July to August we go to the sea and read Kingsley's novels. Science and the partridges come

next ; and a pleasant time would it be if we could keep them each in his own sphere ; but this is impossible. The ladies who do not shoot, geologise, botanise, archæologise, entomologise, and fraternise with all the dreariest old prozers of Europe, and bring back to their homes each day stores of the stalest trash—the study-sweepings of the most learned and long-winded people on the face of the globe.

Now, when I come back to a late dinner, with my eight brace of birds or my fifteen-pound salmon, I want to see Mrs O'Dowd smiling, civil, and complimentary ; and what do I meet ? a woman overwhelmed with care, her eyes actually red with tears. It is the coalfields, she tells me, cannot last above twelve thousand years longer ; or it is the earth's crust—she had it from Mr Buckland himself—is positively a seventeenth of an inch thinner than it was in the time of Moses. I try to dispel her gloom by talking of my day's performance, and how many miles I have walked since breakfast, and she sneeringly tells me “ there was a time when a very different race inhabited this earth, and when one might have seen a young Giant walking about with a mastodon at his heels—just as we see a butcher now with a bull-dog.” This is downright offensive ; it is personal too.

What right has Sir David Brewster or Professor Faraday to fill my wife's head with speculations about the First man? I am, or at least I ought to be, the first man to her; and what bones of contention are these that these rash old crucible-heaters throw into the bosoms of families about the age of the world, and the signs it is giving of decrepitude?

There is a large market, I am told, for second-hand clothes in our colonies; the most flaring colours, the very gaudiest of uniforms, find purchasers. Why not, then, export these second-hand wares of science to Canada and the Cape? Ticket-o'-leave land would, I am sure, appreciate them, and not the less that some of them were stolen. We send them cricketers, why not chemists? We are enthusiastic about acclimatisation; and O how glad I should be to know that we had sent them a ship of entomologists and a large supply of healthy zoologists in spawn, with ample directions for future treatment!

The real difficulty in these lecturings is, that you must be too high or too low for a great portion of your audience. You must either soar into the realms of the $x + y$ people, who live on quadratic equations, or come down to that small twaddle of popular science—a very bread-and-milk diet for the grown-up adults of knowledge.

And we are overrun, actually overrun, with infor-

mation. The press teems with treatises showing how everything is made, and why it was made; and I am very far from believing that the sum of our happiness is the greater in consequence. For the mere enjoyment of life—God forgive me for that “mere!”—but for the mere enjoyment of life, all this knowledge does not contribute very largely.

My enjoyment of M. Houdin was infinitely greater before I read his book and learned how his tricks were done. The wonderful way he abstracted my waistcoat and sent it back to me in the little dog's mouth, and the way he cut open the same little dog to discover my watch which he had swallowed, were charming, till I saw that they could be done with a box and a coil of wire and another gentleman who looked like one of the audience; and, though I am just as far off the ability to perform the trick as ever, I have lost all my desire to see it; and my surprise and my amazement have gone, never to return to me. In precisely the same degree have I suffered from these scientific teachers, and even to a worse extent, for they have robbed me of some illusions I had just as soon they would have spared me. I do not desire to have it impressed upon me so forcibly that I am only a compound of neutral salts, gelatine, fibrine, and adipose matter. It is no pleasure to me to regard Mrs O'Dowd as a vehicle for phosphate of

lime, various carbonates, and an appreciable portion of arsenic.

With all his pride of knowledge, the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" was infinitely happier before he knew he had been talking "prose ;" and I am sure most of us would sleep as soundly under the impression of being men and women, as after hearing an account of a complexity of structure, compared to which a steam-engine is simplicity, and a delicacy of fibre beside which a cobweb is almost a cable.

There is another and especial set who devote themselves to social science, who, so far as outrageous humbug goes, are worse than these ; but I will not treat of them in a postscript. They shall have a page to themselves, and a full one.

PARSONITIS.

WHAT is the meaning of this new malady which deluges Nice with men in white chokers, and renders Naples like a town under an (Episcopal) visitation? It is called—and called professionally too—“Parson’s sore-throat;” and I am all curiosity to learn why it should peculiarly affect the clergy? Surely vocal exercitation exists amongst the laity; lawyers, members of Parliament, auctioneers, and actors, not to speak of lieutenants in the navy, are occasionally loud of speech and profuse of intonation.

The coarser themes that form the staple of bar eloquence, the sterner stuff that men talk on the hustling, the rantings of the stage, and the roaring of the sea-service, might naturally strain the organs fully as much as the most impassioned appeals from the pulpit; and yet how is it that there is no such thing known to physic as Old Bailey Bronchitis or Parlia-

mentary Phthisis? Nor are the watering-places of the Continent filled with legal gentlemen, usually in the charge of a bevy of female friends, who kindly do the talking for them. A mute member of Parliament or a muzzled Queen's Counsel is never met with, but I'll engage to find you five-and-twenty speechless Parsons in every Italian city with a south aspect, mild air, and a large female element in the society.

I have inquired largely amongst my medical friends what is the reason of this strange fact. What can it be in their calling that renders these men more liable to vocal derangements than the other talkers of humanity? The same unsatisfactory answer always met me—It is the preaching does it.

Now, why should pulpit eloquence be more exacting than all other forms of oratory? Is not the place from which the parson speaks rather a check upon than an incentive to those rhetorical flights whose successes are dependent on bold bursts of passion? Torrents of words poured forth in all the exuberance of a flood—apostrophes that, for their effect, call for the wildest imageries conveyed in tones no less startling, the withering storm of invective, the overwhelming avalanche of abuse—have no place in the pulpit, where the very themes inspire self-control, restraint, moderation, a manner of winning persuasion,

and a tone at once equable and conciliating. Are these the subjects which demand a chest swollen and distended, and bronchial tubes strained like the cylinders of high-pressure engines? How can preaching, I ask, be the cause of all this distress? Why must these calm gentle men, of easy lives and well-regulated habits, crack their voices in efforts which call for no inordinate power, and which are, after all, most successful when conveyed in tones very slightly raised above those of ordinary conversation? That the criminal lawyer who has badgered his witnesses in a three hours' cross-examination, and then addressed a five hours' speech to the jury, should go home hoarse as a bull-frog, if not actually voiceless, I can well understand. This man has been performing every instrument of the orchestra with his one poor throat. From oboe to ophicleide he has explored them all—in entreaty, conviction, scorn, pathos, defamation, ridicule, and lastly, to wind up, religion. No wonder if he should only be able to make signs to his wife at dinner, and pantomime his wishes for food and drink. But the Parson—the parson of honeyed words and dulcet accents—the bland, smooth-cheeked, oleaginous angel, the very creak of whose shoes whispers patience—he has none of these moods of violence; for, be it remembered, we talk of sin with far less of reprobation than of the individual

sinner; and no one that ever I heard laid the same stress on the Decalogue as the most commonplace Quarter Session chairman will do in sentencing a delinquent to the game-laws. The abstract never has that tangible reality about it that the smallest instance possesses; and for this reason, again, I say the parson's task exacts less strain, less violent effort, than that of other public speakers. And why, for the third time, I ask, are these men the victims of an especial disease that now goes by their name, and promises, like the Painter's Colic, to show the perils that attach to a peculiar calling? The fact is there; there is no denying it: the speechless curates of the Jardin Anglais at Nice, the voiceless vicars of the Pincian, prove it.

Physicians, I am told, confess themselves little able to deal with this malady; they treat, and treat, and treat it, and end, as they ever do when baffled, by sending the patient abroad. Law and medicine have this much in common, that, whenever they are fairly beaten, "they change the venue."

Hence is it that every sheltered angle on the Mediterranean, every warm nook on the "Corniche," has its three, four, or five mild-faced, pale men, sauntering amongst the orange groves, and whispering through a respirator. There is something so interesting in these people, deserted in a measure by physic,

and left to the slow influences of climate—soft airs and softer attentions being their only medicaments—that I found myself eagerly engaged in thinking, first, what it might be that predisposed to the affection; and, secondly, how it might be met by precaution. Cure, I need not say, I was not presumptuous enough to consider.

I cannot now record how the subject baffled me—what combinations of difficulty met me here, what new and unexpected phenomena started up there; but I went steadily, carefully on. I amassed my facts, I registered my observations; and at last—I hope it is not in vain boastfulness I declare it—I solved my problem. Few words will tell my explanation. The Parson throat is not the malady of necessarily loud talkers or energetic speakers; it is not induced by exaggerated efforts in the pulpit; it is not brought on by terrific denunciations delivered in the trumpet-call, or mild entreaties insinuated in the flute-stop of the human organ. It is simply and purely brought on by men persisting in preaching in an assumed unnatural voice—a conventional voice, imagined, I suppose, to be the most appropriate tone to call sinners from their wickedness and teach them to live better. You are startled by my explanation, but grant me a brief hearing. Who are the victims of this throat-affection? Not the high-and-dry old rubicund par-

sons, with bright frank eyes and well-rounded chins, neat of dress, knowing in horse-flesh, strong in horticulture. These hale and healthy fellows have one voice, just as they have one nature ; the same note that summons the gardener to look after the dahlias cries to the congregation to take care of their souls. They are not, perhaps, out-and-out divines ; there is a bucolic element through them that makes them what Sydney Smith used to call "Squarsons." They are, at all events, a very noble set of fellows and thorough gentlemen. These men are totally free from parsonitis ; a case has never been known amongst them. Next come more muscular Christians, whose throats, attuned to the hunting-field, could perform, if called on, the office of a railroad whistle. These have no touch of the complaint.

All "Colenso," I am told, is exempt, which is the more singular, as the men who deny everything and oppose every one are necessarily called on for vocal efforts of the most forcible kind. This is remarkable.

It is, then, amongst the more distinctively pious of the clergy that the disease commits its ravages—those who, by distinctive epithet, are called Evangelicals. Now there are numbers of these—vast numbers—who labour throughout their whole lives, and labour arduously, untouched by the affection. They are of all classes of the clergy the most un-

tiring, the most devoted, and the most intensely imbued with the duties of their calling ; but there are others who have all their zeal, all their devotion, and all their sincerity, and none of their abilities. These men, eager to emulate the usefulness of their superior brethren, bent on displaying in themselves the splendid success around them, cannot rise to the intellectual heights of their more gifted neighbours, and are driven to imitate not the well-argued statement—not the close narrative of facts—not the impassioned appeal or the startling exhortation, but simply the tone of voice in which these were conveyed. Hence is it that these men, good and excellent men in every way, but of very commonplace minds and unelevated views, copy the one sole trait that has no merit or value—the tone and delivery of those whose manner is simply the offspring of their own overcharged minds.

They denounce without force, they entreat without persuasion. They paint without colour, and they mould, and leave no form after them. They rant, rave, and riot, sob, shudder, and weep ; and all the result is stunned ears to the congregation and sore throats to themselves. They are ineffective because they are not natural. It is their own intense unreality destroys all their usefulness, and mars all their efforts at good.

The very fact that a man is addressing you in a counterfeit voice impugns his sincerity ; for be it remembered these are not the men who carry you away by the magic power of their eloquence, bearing you aloft to a region high above all you have ever soared in, and enchanting you with visions that only Genius discloses to mortal eyes. The men I mean here are taken from the common heap of humanity : they have few gifts, they have no graces ; and whenever they borrow an illustration or steal a figure from their more ornate brethren, they use it as awkwardly as the Otaheitan chief who wore his copper saucepan as a helmet.

A perverse ambition to be something that nature never meant them for—an insensate desire to emulate what is far and away beyond their reach—stirs them up to these furious efforts ; and there is a something in the effect of a man's voice upon himself—a sort of reduplication of self-esteem—that is positively intoxicating. They fancy that they have discovered the secret, caught the trick of success, and they are madly eager and impatient for the day when they too shall send a congregation away overcome with hysteric emotion, panting with religious excitement, and thirsting for more. These men, like all imitators, only copy the faults of their models. Like the gentleman who in reading Locke mistook

the peculiarities of style for points in the argument, they treasure up all the eccentricities of some popular preacher, and retail them as excellencies. Such are the victims of Parsonitis. These are the men that an austere Nemesis sends over the Alps mute and voiceless; and, to *my* thinking, far more persuasive in the eloquence of their silent gentleness than ever they were in this rapt and erratic oratory.

Let the Rev. Paul Slowcoach cease to emulate the Rev. Hugh Highflier; let him be simple, natural, and unaffected; let him employ the same earnestness in the pulpit to save sinners that he would make use of to exhort Mrs S. to some act of domestic economy, or to restrain a restive son from indiscretion. Let him be real, earnest, and truthful to his own nature. In one word, let him avoid all mention of Mesopotamia, and I'll warrant him he'll suffer very little from the pangs of Parsonitis.

But one word more. Should any impartial layman imagine that the cause I have here stated is insufficient for the effect—should he maintain that a mere affectation could scarcely produce a malady,—I only ask him to perform a walk of say ten miles daily on the tips of his toes. Let him try this for a month; and if his back-sinews do not admonish him to return to ordinary progression, my name isn't Cornelius.

“THE DIGNIFIED ATTITUDE.”

THERE is a story told of Sheridan, which all of us have heard—how, one day, when returning unsuccessfully from shooting, never having bagged a single bird, he saw a flock of ducks in a pond, and a labouring man at work hard by. Determined if possible to have something to show for his day's sport, he asked the man for how much he would allow him to have one shot at the brood? The fellow replied, “A crown.” Sheridan fired, and tumbled seven of them. “Well, my honest friend, how do you like your bargain?” asked he, triumphantly. “Well enough,” muttered the other; “the dooks is nane o' mine.”

History, they tell us, repeats itself, and I am disposed to believe it; for this story of the ducks is precisely the story of the French policy in Italy. The Emperor no more owned the Duchies of Mo-

dena, Parma, and Tuscany, than the clown owned the ducks, but he gave Victor Emmanuel a "shot at them" in exchange for Nice and Savoy. Like the country fellow, too, he went off grinning, and saying, "They be none o' mine," thereby hinting that there might come a day of reckoning with the owner which might be far from agreeable.

Now we are in the daily habit of hearing the most fulsome praises of this great Prince; and so successful is success, that even the journals which once took a fairer and juster measure of his capacity, are now, simply by force of the fact that he sleeps nightly at the Tuileries, disposed to accord him all the prescience of a statesman and all the skill of a great general.

I declare I have an ardent desire always to agree with the people around me. I am never so well pleased as when I can concur with a prevailing opinion; and I'm not sure that I wouldn't rather put a little mild coercion on my conscience than dissent from the judgments of "the company." But here I own I cannot. I could no more believe in the greatness of Louis Napoleon than in spirit-rapping. Our credulity is sorely taxed in England: we have to believe Lord Palmerston a wit and Mr Cobden a sage; we have to swallow Carlyle's English, and affect to like it; and when I land at Dover

I do each and all of these things. I prefer the mutton-chop at the Lord Warden to my little dinner at the Cadran Rouge. I like the red-petticoated damsels in the Bad-moral boots better than the trimmest Parisian ankles. I go in to admire Buckstone and bitter beer, and all that is English ; but—and this I resist to the death—nothing shall persuade me that the Emperor of the French is other than a third-rate man, who might have possibly distinguished himself as a police functionary or a solicitor, but has as much claim to high statecraft as Jem Mace to be an authority on the Pentateuch. Let any of us humble folk only enjoy that nice privilege I have just spoken of—let us only sell what doesn't belong to us—and what a snug little competence we should lay up for our declining years ! His last *coup* of this kind was the Franco-Italian treaty. This time it is indeed a very choice lot he submits to public competition. “No reserve, gentlemen ; His Holiness must be knocked down to the highest bidder, for the place is already disposed of to the ‘party next door.’” What a condition for a Pope ! Garibaldi's Hymn thundering at the Vatican ! infallibility going, one may say, for a song !

Austria would like, if she dared, to make a bid. She would like better still to protest against the sale, but how can she ? The Pope was not true to

the Holy Roman Empire once before, and he cannot be trusted ; besides, Austria is weak.

Sheridan—I go to him once more for an illustration—coming home full of wine from a dinner, heard a voice from the channel of the street, in tones of evident ebriety, saying, "Lift me up—lift me up." "No," said Brinsley, "that's impossible : but I'll tell you what I'll do ; I'll lie down beside you." Such is the answer Austria gives the Holy See—"We can't lift you up, but we'll lie down beside you."

It is very consoling to us small fry in the world's fish-pond that these leviathans only repeat in their policy what we blunder out in our potations.

But this is not all. When by any accident there is a European rumpus, in which France takes no active part, maintaining what the Parisian papers call the "Dignified Attitude that becomes her," the Emperor, who naturally feels he cannot give away that for which others have fought and conquered, coolly steps in and declares that whoever obtains it will have become, by the added territory, inconveniently strong for France, and that, in consequence, he himself must have something somewhere of somebody else's to redress the balance, and enable France to go on maintaining the "Dignified Attitude" aforesaid. Now, when these two elements constitute a policy, I cannot but think that the rest

of the world must fare ill at every attempt they make to recolour the map of Europe.

This is in reality, in our own age, very little else than the practice of feudal times. It is blackmail over again, and Louis Napoleon is the Gregor Macgregor of Europe. The Prussians have let it get abroad that they mean to annex some of the Danish spoils. Austria, who lent her aid to win them, sulks; but France, the generous France—that country which alone of Europe enters the arena for glory, and not for gain—steps in and says, “The price of this piece of Jutland is Sarre-Louis; don’t higggle. This is the *prix fixe* establishment, and we neither come down nor give credit.”

Last of all, where he cannot take territory he takes patronage. If he can’t absorb the estate, he at least names the agent, as we saw a few days back in Mexico.

How pleasant it must be to work under such a master! How it simplifies all the details of office! How straight and clear it makes the path of duty! Let the representative of France be at Cochin-China or Lancaster Sound, he knows, he “appreciates,” as the phrase is, “the benign intentions of the Emperor.” Messrs Benasset, of the gaming-tables at Baden and Homburg, stipulate that they are to have the “zero” for themselves, and the advantage is

estimated at about eight or ten per cent on all the sums staked at the table. Of course, the more money that is played the more is their gain. You and I may wage a fierce war on each other in black and red, but the Messrs Benasset, who look on, have only to wait for their zero; and eventually, by a mathematical certainty, if we only play long enough, we shall both be ruined, and they acquire all that we once possessed. This is precisely what the Emperor does. He seldom plays, but merely contents himself with the zero. Ten per cent on the game, gentlemen, and the *après*. Ah, these *après*; these are my perquisites. "Faites votre jeu," and you'll see what will come of it.

I don't wonder John Bull sulked, and took an oath against play. He used to like his game once well enough; he was generally lucky, and though he was not always good-humoured when he lost, he booked up like a gentleman, and nobody ever called him defaulter. Now, however, this newfangled game irritates him. It's not on the square. That "Mossoo" there knows more about the balls than he ought, and he charges, besides, too much for the "tables."

My own impression is "Bull" is right. A respectable tradesman cannot mind his shop in the day if he passes his nights in a hell. We all know where

the business would go if he were to do so ; and for this reason I say, Keep away from that French roulette-table ; or if you must play, play low—never “ stake a sovereign.”

If the Italians could learn a little of this prudence it would stand them in good stead ; but they have got a greedy fit on them just now, and their fingers are itching for gain. Surely they might see that, even if they succeed to the inheritance, the legacy-duty will run away with one-half of it—ay, and Louis Napoleon will have it too, and suffer no one to “ tax his costs.”

This man is the Benasset of politics, and nothing more. The game pays admirably, for it is a gambling era just now. All the lethargic laziness of a long peace has been succeeded by a spirit of venture and hazard. Italy has had a run, and wants to back her luck to the end. Cautious Prussia, that never risked a groschen, has gone in for a *coup* at Holstein. Even Spain—dreary, old, repudiating, disreputable Spain—has managed to get a few gold pieces together, and been trying a little game with Morocco. France, the bland croupier, everywhere cries, “ Try your luck, gentlemen ! ” “ Faint heart,” &c. Even John, businesslike old dog that he is, jingles his half-crowns in his pocket and longs to be at it. Was there ever such a time for a hell-keeper as this ? It is only

necessary to light the rooms and open the doors, the company fill the place immediately. All honest industry, in such an age, is the pace of the tortoise over the course at Newmarket: it is a theory by-gone, out of place, unthought of. No wonder is it that the careful, plodding, unambitious course of England should seem degenerate and mean amidst all these high-spirited bloods, flinging their stakes so boldly on the table, and reckless, to all seeming, whether they win or lose.

There are now and then, in the order of nature, disturbing events occurring, which no forecasting could ever have either anticipated or averted. They are things so really out of all calculation, that all we have to do is to watch their course, and learn, if we may, somewhat for future guidance. Now one of this nature was the late burst of enthusiastic nationality over Germany. Who could have believed this?—who have foreseen it? Is there any creature—one part statesman and three parts poet—could have risen to the mere imagination of a frantic Germany—a Germany eager for liberty, crying wildly aloud not to be parcelled out into Hoch—something or other, but made one great "Beer-land," that could smoke all its tobacco at the same tariff?

I declare it looks and sounds perfectly incredible, but it is all true—we have seen it; and though it

did not last very long, yet, like table-turning and spirit-knocking, there are respectable witnesses ready to aver that they "assisted" at the *séance*.

That a green-surfaced pond, duck-weeded and frog-spawned, stagnant for ages, and unmoved by every air of heaven, should suddenly imagine itself to be a great fluid of strong elements and incalculable power, and should set to work to lash itself into fermentation by way of becoming brandy, would not be one whit stranger or more absurd than this great German demonstration.

That such movements are utterly abnormal, that they lie neither in the genius nor in the instincts of the nation, we may see by the simple fact that none of the statesmen of the country knew in the least how to deal with them. They stood there, panic-stricken and confounded, like the doctors of Europe at the first visitation of Oriental cholera!

What fun it must have been for the grand Charlatan of the Tuileries, as, watching it all, he murmured to himself, "They'll never be able to treat this case; they'll have to come to *me*." And there is no doubt, if the symptoms had not subsided, such would have been the upshot. Grave talking there was of a new Confederation of the Rhine, and small Princes began to reflect whether it might not be better to become French Prefects than Imperial

or Royal Chamberlains. As for the people, they stood like a great flock of sheep, as they are, staring at the peril with a steadfastness that looked like daring ; but they scampered away at the first crack of Bismarck's whip, and they have never turned since.

In such an age, with such elements as these around us, greatness is surely not difficult of attainment ; and the "Dignified Attitude of France" can be preserved, even though it be represented by a foot upon a friend's throat, and a hand in a neighbour's pocket.

MR BANTING.

I WAS very wroth for a considerable time with that fat man—Mr Banting I think he is called—who has been boring the world for some months back with accounts of his decrease in size, till I bethought me that possibly I might have been doing him a foul wrong, and imputing to selfish motives, and a taste for notoriety, what in reality might turn out to be very high-minded and elevated patriotism.

My first impression was, Here is a corpulent old humbug, who has no greater or more ennobling task in life than to measure his girth round the waist, weigh his fat sides, and keep a register of his palpitations as he goes up-stairs to bed—publishing, too, to the world these experiences, as if they were great boons and blessings to humanity, and proclaiming aloud how and by what subtle devices he contrived to grow thinner; and all this nasty balderdash—

nasty it unquestionably is—in a land where misery and destitution abound, and where we read such a heading to a paragraph in our newspapers as “Death by Starvation.” Of what stuff must a man be made who can see his digestional diary printed in the same column that reveals a death from actual want? Of what, besides “fat,” must a creature be compounded, who can go on from day to day recording the effects produced upon his heavy carcass by abstention from saccharine matter and suchlike, when the great monster Misery stares us in the face—that there are people without any food at all—that there are men and women, blue-lipped and gaunt with famine, hollow-eyed and jaw-sunken, crawling about in search of garbage and offal?

We used to be disgusted at the aldermanic envy of the beggar who declared he had not eaten for twenty-four hours, expressing itself in the outburst, “Oh, if I had your appetite!” but what shall we say to this mass of heaving blubber that only cries out to be decreased, of repletion that implores to be drained, in the very crisis of cotton-famine, of Irish want, and of almost universal destitution! When the Queen of France suggested giving *brioche* to the starving populace, she was only ignorant, not unfeeling. When a Duke of Norfolk proposed curry-powder to the famine-stricken in Ireland, he was simply talking

like a very kindhearted but addle-headed old gentleman, who knew nothing of the malady for which he was prescribing. But here is far worse: here is a man who, in a day of great pressure and want, when the energy of every thoughtful man is taxed to think by what contrivance the souls and bodies of some hundred thousand people are to be held together, comes forward to tell us, not how to support life, not how to keep the spark alight with some cheap substitute for fuel, not how to maintain the faint flicker alive by some newly-found expedient, but how *he* has contrived to keep down his own redundant heat—to put slack upon the over-exuberant blaze of his own personal hearth.

Can indecency and selfishness go farther?

Corpulency is unpleasant, so is a tight boot; but don't expatiate on either to people who are hungry or who go barefoot. Your coat may be too tight in the sleeve, but don't talk of it in the society of the half-naked. And this is precisely what this fat man is doing! Good heavens! the ill of the world is not repletion,—it is emptiness; and all the other fat men are running about in their own pluffy and breathless manner, asking, What about malt? How is it as to chocolate? Are anchovies bad for me? Must I cut off my stilton? To these I say, Let me be your doctor. Retrench your all-absorbing self-in-

terest. Turn your thoughts from your duodenum to the famishing creatures who peer down through the railings of your areas at the blazing fire in your kitchen-grate. Give up this filthy selfishness that takes for its worship all that is least worthy in humanity. Walk, ride, bathe, swim, fast if you must, but take your thoughts off this detestable theme ; and try to remember that the subject you want to popularise is in its details one of the coarsest that can be made matter of conversation.

To take the matter in its less serious light, how is society to be carried on if Bantingism is to prevail ? Are we to weed our acquaintance of all the fat people, and never know any one above ten stone eight ? or are we to divide our dinners into fat days and thin days, having all the grampuses one day, all the sword-fish on another ? This latter measure will be forced upon us, for how otherwise shall we feed our Bantings ? To invite them to an ordinary repast of fish, flesh, and fowl, would be as rank an awkwardness as to ask Cardinal Wiseman to a beefsteak on a Friday. You cannot, of course, place before your guest what he would deem little short of a poison ; and how are you to eliminate all the carbon out of your sirloin, the ozone out of your vegetables, gelatinous matter out of your veal, and saccharine ingredients out of your pudding ? If one couldn't afford

to have Faraday in the kitchen, there will be no doing this. Analytical chemistry is not a very speedy performance, besides; and if this system be pursued, it will take at least two days to prepare a very humble meal; and a party of twelve Bantings would take fully a week's hard work, both chemical and culinary. Now, judging from the man's book, I suspect that he and eleven more like him would be dear at the price.

From Falstaff downwards I have ever liked fat men; they are all to nothing the pleasantest fellows that walk the earth. They are genial by force of temperament; and there is neither ungenerous sarcasm in their drollery nor malice in their wit. They look, besides—and let me tell you it is no small thing—they look as if they enjoyed life; while “that lean and hungry Cassius” is a perpetual protest against pleasantry. His drolleries are all dyspeptic, and his very laugh is an estopper on fun. Why, in the name of all good-fellowship, diminish the number of these? Is the world too enjoyable?—is society really so intensely amusing that it is necessary, even at the cost of our very flesh, to curb our wit and restrain our brilliancy? I have no complaint of this kind to make of the neighbourhood about me. I am free to say there is no plethora of agreeability that wants to be depleted. Mr Banting's

experiences are possibly different ; but if so, I'd rather he'd tell me where he lives than what he eats—with whom he associates, and not what he avoids in diet.

The glorious exuberance of the fat man is not merely physical ; it extends to the operations of his brain and the tricks of his fancy. It is out of his rich abundance that he gives you his drollery. Tell me an anecdote or a good *mot*, a racy reply or a witty rejoinder, and I'll stake my reputation or half-a-crown—whichever you think best of—on it, that I'll tell you whether it was a fat or a thin man was the author. There is a mental breadth in the fat man, a width in his toleration, a glorious sense of easy absorption about him, that make him infinitely more companionable than a thin man.

When a friend of mine—who told me the story—once met Sydney Smith at Brighton, where he had gone to reduce by the use of certain baths in vogue in those days, he was struck by the decrease of Sydney's size, and said, "You are certainly thinner than when I saw you last." "Yes," said he ; "I have only been ten days here, but they have scraped enough off me already to make a curate."

And so it is, the imperceptible waste of fat men is equal to a thin one ; and once again I say, it is of

these they would rob us. Why, they are the very marrow of humanity.

Possibly, however, I have been all this time unjust and unfair to Mr Banting, and what I deemed a personal narrative was only a parable. Has Mr B., while speaking of himself, been really describing the state of England? Is this plethora—this over-abundance, this bursting prosperity, this unwieldy size, this unmanageable mass—the Nation? Are all his counsels addressed to a people who have given themselves up to repletion, and think of nothing but growing fatter? Is the carbon of which he warns us our coal-fields, whose exhaustion he forebodes? When he speaks of saccharine matter, is it a hit at Gladstone about sugar? In this prohibition of beer does he want a repeal of the malt-tax, like the virtuous old ladies who gave up sugar in their tea to put down the slave-trade?

Is the “going down-stairs backwards” an emblem of that painful step-by-step progression in which, while we go lower and lower, we have not even the small courage required to look at what we are coming to?

In the remark that our “size unfits us for places of amusement,” and that “we take up more space” than our neighbours like to accord us, Mr Banting is only repeating what French newspapers are daily telling us.

Last of all, as to the "Turkish Bath," what he says is perfectly true. We *did* try it (at Sebastopol), and it reduced us uncommonly; and though we have contrived to get up our flesh since, we are forced to own that we are not as strong as we used to be!

Now, I repeat this may be the true reading of the Banting epistle, and I am the more ready to believe it to be such that there are touches of true kindness and honest philanthropy in the pamphlet, which would ill accord with a theme of mere selfishness.

I am a very poor exponent of symbolic influences; but it would give me sincere pleasure to go over Banting with Dr Cumming, whose aid in tracing the clues to the imagery would be invaluable. "Banting explained, with reference to the 'GREAT CORPULENCE COMING,'" would be a taking title, and I throw it out as a hint to "the trade."

One word more. If there really be people with so much disposable time on their hands, and so much redundant fat on their ribs, as Mr Banting, and who eagerly desire to reduce, let me recommend to them a far simpler and easier process than the complicated chemistry of this gentleman's book. There is a little volume—I have it now before me—called 'A Summary Account of Prizes for Common Things,' offered and awarded by Miss B. Coutts, at the Whitelands Training Institution. In this valuable treatise,

which may be called 'The Anti-Banting,' the problem is, not to subdue the increase of flesh, but how to subsist on the smallest modicum of food ; how soup is to be made with the minimum of meat ; how vitality can be maintained with the very least possible assistance from external aid.

Amongst the variety of receipts in this volume there is one we recommend to Banting. It is a soup composed of what the writer calls the cheapest part of a cow—the fore vein, which lies between the neck and the shoulder, and is of an irregular shape. "The soup made from this, with barley, carrots, and an onion, is excellent." Now I say here you have no complications about osmazone or the phosphates ; not a word is there of adipose matter, nitrogen, or that fell ingredient, sugar. Let the Bantings sit down to this every day at one o'clock as their principal meal, and I warrant them they'll be as slim in three months as the prize labourer who invented the compound. There is another receipt for a broth to be made of what the writer calls "a sheep's pluck," and pluck is exactly the quality the eater of it would require. And there is also, at page 203, "a cheap and nourishing dish without meat," which it would be a downright pleasure to set before Banting every day for a month, and have his report on its nutritive qualities. Not to seem cruel, however, I should

allow him "beef-stickings" (see page 35) on Sundays.

Nor can I omit an invaluable suggestion at page 46, not alone admirable in its relation to diet, but with an ethical inference that deserves commemoration: "Whey, the liquid left after making cheese, is a nutritious drink for children. When in large quantities, it will materially assist in fattening—the Pigs!"

Now, as I have taken some pains to show where these culinary treasures are to be found, I trust Banting and his whole house will try them. As to the contributors to the volume itself, I observe that in most household expenditures there is a weekly penny dedicated to periodicals. Might I ask a preference, and humbly hint, in return for my own small services here exerted, that they would take in Corny O'Dowd, whose second volume will shortly appear in print.

HYBRID CONSERVATISM.

I HAVE had it on my heart for many a day to protest against a race of politicians who have much annoyed and not a little troubled me—a class of men, who, in the very absence of all convictions, assume a sort of especial claim to fairness, and who would like to pass off their thorough cold-bloodedness for the true and proper temperature of the political body. I mean those Hybrid Conservatives who profess to believe in their own party, but always vote with Lord Palmerston—men who would like to pass the morning in the Reform Club, and dine every day at the Carlton. A few years back they were three or four, now they are a distinct section. If England were not, *par excellence*, the land of “Sham,” such a class would never have presumed to stand forward and declare their opinions. In a country so full of crotchets we are naturally tolerant of our neighbours’

eccentricities ; and if a man does not do actual mischief with his hobby, we are always disposed to let him ride on as long as he likes ; but if we find that the oddity we had endured perhaps out of a compassionate leniency and kindness towards an individual, is to become an endemic tendency through a neighbourhood, we naturally grow uneasy. We can endure one infatuated performer on the bassoon, but if the whole street or the crescent take to it, the affair is serious. This is exactly what has happened. A few very crafty men discovered some time ago that what between the growing indifference to "party" outside the House, and the few questions which separated the two sides within it, it might be possible, by the exercise of caution and adroitness, to give a certain support to each in turn, by which, without formally breaking with their friends, they might greatly conciliate their adversaries, and thus, while very materially serving their personal interests, acquire that grand character for fairness, by which, once attained, every platitude a man utters becomes wisdom, and the dreariest trash he delivers to his constituents is listened to as the quintessence of good sense and honesty.

"I declare to you frankly"—Oh, how I dread that frankly!—"I declare to you frankly, gentlemen, that my sentiments are still as they have ever been—a

steady resolve to maintain our time-honoured institutions, so as to hand down to our children unimpaired the glorious heritage we have received from our ancestors. Though no man will ever be more ready than myself to uphold, and if need be to defend, the great constitution of these realms in all the integrity of its strength, and all the equipoise of its power, yet I *do* think"—great emphasis on the *do*—"that, balanced as parties now are, situated as England is with respect to foreign nations, charged as we are with the mighty responsibilities that attach to the rule of one-eighth of the inhabitants of the globe,—I say, gentlemen, I do think we cannot do better than follow the time-honoured statesman, who, though seated on an adverse bench, is the steadfast upholder and defender of the honour of England. I know Lord Palmerston, gentlemen—I know him well; and with whatever credit my character may lend me, I declare to you he is the steadfast and uncompromising upholder of," &c. &c. &c.

Now, I don't object to these extramural bleatings at all. There are very few airs on the political fiddle, and if we are fond of the music, we must put up with the "Da Capos." I only want that the tune should be performed by the right men. Let not Archbishop M'Hale hum, "Croppies lie down," and tell me it is a Canticle.

Vote with Lord Palmerston, and welcome ; only don't acquire the right to do so by a juggle and trick : don't palm yourself off on a Conservative constituency as a man of their party, to desert that party when the day of trial has arrived ; and, above all, do not build upon a settled plan of personal advantage and advancement a character with the world for impartiality and scrupulous honour. These men desire to be Conservatives on a sort of limited liability. They remind me of the Irishman who presented himself before his priest to get married ; but, instead of the five shillings, the appropriate fee, could only produce half-a-crown. After vainly employing all his eloquence to melt the priest's heart, he suddenly stopped short and said,—“ Well, see then, y'r Rivinence, the divil a sixpence more I have, so marry me as far as that goes ! ” This is exactly the way they want to be Conservatives—“ a cheap bargain and a road out of it,” is the sum and substance of what they aim at. May I ask what sort of constituencies like to be thus represented ? There is not one word of exaggeration in what I have said. I appeal to the speeches the newspapers have been so drearily crammed with for the last three months to corroborate me. But indeed if there be people who listen with pleasure to the speeches, they may, by a parity of absurdity, think well of the speakers.

Now, Lord Palmerston is not a great artiste—but a *réchauffé* of him is too much for any human stomach, and yet they give us nothing else. Who is not sick of the praises we bestow on ourselves for not going to war—when war was the very last thing in our thoughts? Who is not weary of hearing how beautifully we kept out of the American conflict—the “fratricidal slaughter,” as they call it? I wish any one would tell me which is Cain, and which Abel. I only know that their mother might be ashamed of them both.

Who, I beg to ask, is taught—who is instructed—whose knowledge is enlarged, by these frothy outpourings? They are very lamentable spectacles, these “visits to our constituents.” I trust fervently that the men who make these speeches approach the humiliation in a spirit of proper self-mortification. I ardently hope that they feel it to be a day of sackcloth and ashes; and, indeed, if angels could be supposed to weep for members of Parliament, they might shed some tears for such misery.

Why, in this age of universal literature, has nobody thought of skeleton speeches for sucking politicians? The parsons have got skeleton sermons, wherein they supply the “padding” themselves, and the blandest disciple of high-and-dryism, or the sternest denouncer of mundane enjoyments, can fit

himself in a moment. I am told, too, that since Bishop Colenso's defection, discourses can be had in which Joshua is treated pretty much like the author of 'Junius,' so that, in reality, no shade or tint of opinion need have to look far for an exponent.

I wish some enterprising publisher would engage me in the task; and I bind myself to supply "the trade" on the most reasonable terms and the shortest notice.

Mr Moses fits his clients in Yorkshire or the Land's End by a few general measurements—the width of the shoulders, the girth at the waistband, the length from the hips, &c. Now I promise, on equally brief information, to send off by the night-mail a true-blue address, a Whig "apostasy," or a Radical "rouser," done in a true, finished, and workmanlike manner. I remember a friend of mine, to whom Nature had not been gracious in muscular development, having once to perform a part in a private play where tight-fitting pantaloons were essential. He addressed himself to one of the minor theatres for counsel, and the costumer, to whom his case was referred, immediately called out, "Ah, sir, I see it at once; you want Mr Matthews's legs. Fetch them down, James."

Now, if any country gentleman wants the Palmerston legs, or, more ambitious still, the Gladstone—or should he ambition the sturdier pair that support

John Bright—I'm his man. "*P.S.*—Any gentleman taught 'Bernal Osborne' in two lessons. Persons whose education has been neglected made perfect 'Roebucks' in one. A line, addressed Cornelius O'Dowd, to the care of his Publisher, will be immediately attended to. None treated with except principals; the strictest secrecy observed." I promise you, constituencies will benefit by the change. As a respectable tradesman, who wants to extend his custom, I'll not sell them any cast-off wares, nor vamp up any stale Joe Millers. Never a word shall they hear from me about that strange beast, the *Civis Romanus*, of which the Zoological Garden has not even a specimen. I'll neither bully the French, nor flatter them. I only bargain for one plagiarism. If it be a Whig oration, I must wind up with a few words for "the glorious harvest." This, you will admit, is fair. The Whigs have ripened the wheat ever since the Reform Bill, and we ought to be grateful to them. Newspaper adulation, in a tone that must be ineffably offensive to the ears it was intended to charm, has invented the phrase the "Queen's Weather." Let me suggest the propriety of exchanging the term "Harvest Moon" for the "Pam. Quarter;" so that, while we replenish our granaries, we should remember the Government.

The Conservatives have many faults—they have

done much they ought not to have done, and omitted some things they ought to have done ; but in nothing have they erred so egregiously as in tolerating within their ranks these men of rotten allegiance. Nor was it mere toleration, but they have actually gone out of the way to conciliate them. This attempt to widen the base of a party by greater liberality, as it is called, is often very fatal. You may beat your guinea too thin. And who, I ask, were these people for whom you made these sacrifices—not only of opinion, but of conscience ? Was there one really able man amongst them ? The first Napoleon used to complain of what he called “*les frondeurs*” in the army of Italy, the fellows who were so beautifully candid that they always thought the enemy did everything better than themselves—not merely fought better, but fed their people better, doctored them better, and rewarded them better.

To do *him* justice, he made very short work with such folk when he once got hold of them. We, on the contrary, caress and fondle them ; we listen to their sentiments, and mould our own to their liking ; and even when we see them cross over and join our adversaries, we are so magnificently generous, that we not only forgive the defection but actually exalt the deserters. Would Pitt have suffered this ? would the Great Duke have endured it ? Are the Whigs of

our own day so Christian-like in forgiveness that they would make room on their benches for men who never rise but to vote against them?

The cry of our day is, "There is no party;" but how can there be party, when the men who take no oath of allegiance to a leader are deemed as faithful as the sworn soldier who fights bravely to the death? There is no army if there be no discipline, and this is exactly what we see amongst the Conservatives. The rewards are not given to the valiant, nor are the renegades handed over to the provost-marshal.

We have not outgrown party in England. To say we are too liberal, or too enlightened, for party, is to talk balderdash; but party has ceased to have its distinctive marks, because certain people have invented a uniform that enables them to fight with either army, and take pay from both! For these hybrids I speak of take the bounty from us, and draw their pay from the enemy.

What has brought this reproach that we hear every day, of a want of policy on the Conservative benches, but these men who bridge over party, and contrive to make the Opposition benches a sort of outpost of the Treasury? They have got up the cant, Pam is doing our work. Ay, but I answer, and he is taking the wages too. There is no such need as people say to make common cause against the Radicals. John

Bright is a clever fellow enough, but neither he nor his following ought to frighten us for the future of the Constitution. Both the monarchy and the coal-fields have a good many years before them, and "the Great Tribulation Coming" will not proceed out of Manchester, nor will Richard Cobden be its Prophet.

I am far more afraid of small defections than of great defeats, and I own I'll never believe in the discipline of party till the day comes that we hang a mutineer!

Once for all, then, I say, no caresses, no flatteries for those men who are not true to you. No blandishments for those delicate followers who require to cross over from time to time to the Government benches for a little warmth and sunshine, as invalids go to Italy for climate. No converse with the political ventriloquists who sit on one side of the House and talk from the other. If these people get acceptance, once that they are unmasked and exposed, political honesty is but a sorry affair. Party, in its honourable signification, cannot exist where they prosper; and of the constituencies that return them I say, as Chief Baron O'Grady did of the disreputable counsel of a worse client—"May you never be separated!"

THE FIGHT OVER THE WAY.

LUDWIG TIECK has a story of a visit he once made to a madhouse, where he saw two of the inmates engaged at chess. Struck by what he imagined to be a strange instance of intellectual activity in persons so bereaved, he drew nigh to watch the game. What was his surprise, however, to perceive, that though they moved the pieces about the board at random—castles sidling along like bishops, and bishops playing leap-frog over knights—their intentness and eagerness all the while were fully equal to what real players might have exhibited. At last one cried out “Check!” not that there was the slightest ground for the intimation, but he said it boldly and defiantly. The other, in evident trepidation, considered for a while, and moved. “Check!” reiterated the former; and once more did the assailed man attempt to escape. “Check-

mate!" exclaimed the first; and held up his hands in triumphant exultation; while the other, overwhelmed by his disaster, tore his hair, and gave way to the most extravagant grief. After a while, however, they replaced the pieces, and began once more, doubtless to renew the same mock struggle and mock victory; the joy of the conqueror, and the sorrow of the conquered, being, however, just as real as though the contest had engaged the highest faculties that ever were employed in the game.

Now, does not this immensely resemble what we are witnessing this moment in America? There are the two madmen engaged in a struggle, not one single rule nor maxim of which they comprehend. Moving cavalry like infantry, artillery like a waggon-train, violating every principle of the game, till at length one cries Checkmate; and the other, accepting the defeat that is claimed against him, deploras his mishap, and sets to work for another contest.

At Bull's Run the word "Check" almost began the game. Later on they played out a little longer, but now they usually clear the board of a large number of the pieces before either asserts he has conquered. So far as results go, everything is pretty much the same as if they had been consummate players.

If it were not that the stake on the issue is the greatest that men can play for on earth, I doubt much

if War would ever have held that high position men assign it. As a mere game, its inferiority to many other games is striking enough. It is not merely that the moves are few and the combinations limited, but that the varying nature of the material it is played with will always prove a source of difficulty, and a great barrier against all exactitude. Imagine a game of chess where the pieces would have a volition—where your castle might lie down or your pawn refuse to advance—where a panic would seize your knights, or your bishops object to stand their ground—and you have at once an image of actual war.

It is this simplicity in the art of war, doubtless, that has led these people to believe that there is nothing in it at all—that its rules are voluntary, and its laws optional; for how otherwise should we see dry-goods men converted into generals, and country attorneys into brigadiers? There is not one of these men who unhesitatingly assumes the command of a corps or a division, who would sit down to a round game, at a high stake, which he had never seen played in his life. He would modestly own that he did not understand it—that he had never even witnessed it before. Not so with war; there, all is so easy, uncomplicated, and simple, that any one who ever mixed a julep can lead an army.

Like Tieck's chess-players, then, they have made a

game of their own, and it must be owned there is no lack of earnestness in the way they play it. They sweep off the pieces with a high hand, and they make a clearance on the board just as boldly as though they were all Philidors. Now Tieck remarks, if these men had been playing a real game, wherein certain rules should have been observed, and certain obligations complied with, their weariness would have obliged them to desist long before they did so here. The brain would not have sustained such incessant calls upon it, and the man would have needed rest; and such, I opine, is the reason of the continuance of the struggle we are now witnessing. Each plays as he likes, takes what he likes, and goes where he likes. The game has no laws, and there is nothing to be learned. Any one can cut in that pleases — cut out, too, when he's sick of it.

Looking to this fact, nothing can be more unfair than any preference accorded to this man over that. Why Sherman before Meade, or Grant before McClellan? Surely the game Tieck tells of could have been played by the whole asylum.

Just, however, as I feel assured that nobody who ever played chess would have dignified with that name the strange performance of the madmen, so am I convinced that none would call this struggle a war. It

is a fight—a very big fight, if you will, and a very hard fight too, but not war. They go at it with a will. That pacific creature, Paddy, insures a considerable amount of activity in the pastime. Its very irregularity pleases him. It is a sort of gigantic Donnybrook, with oceans of broken heads and unlimited whisky; and, like Donnybrook, nobody knows what he is fighting for, or cares either.

Such a millennium of mischief poor Pat never dreamed of in his most exalted moments. To have a row ready for him at his landing, and to be paid for fighting, is an amount of beatitude that he can scarcely realise.

I own I attribute a great deal of the persistency with which the conflict is carried on to this element, making a row a career—converting a fight into a livelihood.

Another cause also contributed not a little to the continuance of this struggle—the immense notoriety it has attracted throughout the world to America and the Americans. These people, for the first time in their lives, found themselves an object of European interest. Up to this they had been little known as a people at this side of the Atlantic. A rare ingenuity in mechanical invention, and a very curious taste in drinks, had certainly been associated with their name; but beyond gun-stocks and gin-juleps,

sherry-cobblers and India-rubber boots, they had not been supposed to have conferred much on humanity. To become suddenly famous as a great military nation, was then an immense bribe to national vanity. Hitherto it was their boast to consume more *pâté de foie gras*, more champagne, and more Parisian finery, than any other people; but what if they could rival France in glory as well as gluttony!

Their pride was ever in a certain vastness, which implied greatness. They had the biggest rivers, the biggest corn-fields, the biggest forests, and why not the biggest battles and the biggest debt?

Now, I am much disposed to believe that these people would have made peace long ago if we had not given them so much of our attention and our interest. If, instead of sending out our own graphic correspondent to describe, and our artist to draw them, we had treated the whole as a vulgar commonplace row, from which there was no one useful lesson to be learned, moral or military;—had we ignored them in our journals and forgotten them in our leaders—had the public speakers of our platforms omitted all their dreary lamentations over “fratricidal conflict” and “decimating war,” my conviction is, the combatants would have been chewing the cud of peace together two years since.

You made a ring for them, and what could they do but fight? You backed this one against that, and they went in with a will, only too proud to attract so respectable an audience, and be a matter of notoriety to such a well-dressed company. Had you really been sincere, you would have turned your backs on the performance. Had you felt half the horror you pretend, you would have gone home and declared the sight too disgusting to look on. You would have had neither words of encouragement nor rebuke—neither caresses nor censures—which could only be provocatives in either case. Had you been simply HONEST, you would have said, This is not War, nor are these soldiers; but if these people imagine that their undisciplined valour is to inaugurate a new era in military science, they will go on slaughtering each other for half a century. Let us show them we are not of their mind, and they will come to their senses. Why, the very mockery of the names they apply to their generals discloses the whole nature of the imposition. The young Napoleon McClellan! The Desaix this—the Wellington that—what are all these but the confessions of a rivalry that has long galled them? They would reenact with native performers the grand battle-pieces of the First Empire; and just as all their splendour and luxury are an imitation of Old-World extrava-

gance, so would they make even their glory a travesty of the French article.

“*Ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius* ;” and so you cannot make marshals of France out of drab-coated Philadelphians or pedantic Bostonians, no more than you can make the very names of their battle-fields ring in verse. Think of Rancocus, Little Lick, Spottsylvania, and Funksville, and ask a Yankee laureate to commemorate them. What are poets to do with Murfreesborough, and Bull’s Run, and Orange Court-House, redolent as they are of “liquoring up” and the tobacco quid?

In the report of a Mansion-House speech of Lord Palmerston’s, just before me, I see that his Lordship says he “trusts human nature will not long permit the deadly and disastrous strife to continue.” Now I am ready to concede a much larger knowledge to the noble Viscount, as to what human nature is capable of, than any I myself possess ; but to what section of human nature he refers, and to what precise action it is to take in the premises, I confess I am ignorant. There is a very considerable element of “human nature” engaged in this same strife, and a much larger one outside even more interested in its continuance. How Lord Palmerston’s other friends in “human nature” are to interfere, I am curious to know. Perhaps, as

ladies say about mechanics, "it can be done somehow with a spring;" so his Lordship may vaguely ascribe the same unlimited resources to this agent. If so, I yield the point, and am quite ready to believe that the American conflict will cease whenever "human nature" has had enough of it.

TRAVESTIES.

TRAVELLED reader, have you ever been in the little German city of Hesse-Cassel? If you have, and if you have gone to the theatre there, you could not have failed to be struck by the unusual splendour of the costumes. They are not, it is true, quite so fresh as they once were, but there is in their actual value and richness what more than compensates for a little decline of splendour. The gold is gold, the velvet is of the richest pile of Lyons or Genoa, the lace is Valenciennes or "point de Bruxelles," the tassel that hangs from the sword-hilt is bullion as honest as that worn by a marshal of France. In a word, whatever delusions may be practised elsewhere there are none about the costumes, and the fall of antique *guipure* that covers the cavalier's boot, or the plume that droops from his hat, might have been the wear of the proudest Reichsgraf of the Empire.

I have no desire to torment your ingenuity to explain this strange circumstance. I will tell you at once how it occurred. There was once on a time a certain Emperor of the French called Napoleon, who invented kings pretty much as other monarchs used to cure the evil—by royal touch ; and amongst these he once made a king of Westphalia—a kind-hearted, amiable, and rather fanciful sort of gentleman, whose pleasure it was to imagine himself descended from a long line of royal ancestry ; and not being exactly able to demonstrate this fact, he hit upon an expedient—it almost sounds like “a bull” in action—to appear ancient, by dressing up all his court in mediæval style ; and as he could not throw his family into antiquity, he put himself and all about him into the clothes they wore ; and so, in the century we now live in, he figured about in a slashed doublet and hose, a slouched hat and a short cloak, that might have been the pink of fashion in the year 1600.

It was a very harmless folly, and it encouraged trade, and so his subjects liked it ; and I have no doubt that it made him then and there a far more popular monarch than if he had passed his nights over a Reform Bill, a Habeas Corpus Act, or any other of these blessings, for the possession of which we deem ourselves models for the imitation of all humanity.

While, therefore, his great brother was making war, this prince masqueraded, and, as the event proved, just as profitably ; for the same disaster that robbed the one of his throne, despoiled the other of his wardrobe.

The restored princes were not very remarkable either for generosity or nobility of sentiment : when the tide of fortune had turned in their favour, some of them had short memories, and forgot their friends ; but there were others still worse—they had wonderful memories, and recollected all their enemies. The Elector of Hesse-Cassel was one of these ; he did a variety of small and spiteful acts, and amongst them he decreed that he would only grant a concession to the proprietor of the Hof-theatre to open his house, on the distinct condition that he dressed his entire company in the costumes of the late Court, which were then on sale. Of course it was a very hard bargain to a man who would no more have thought of dressing his characters in real sables and satin, than of actually killing outright the villain of the piece. There was, however, no help for it. Needs must, says the adage, with a certain coachman on the box ; and hence it came about that they who witness *Don Carlos*, or *Cabal und Liebe*, on the Cassel stage, may actually imagine themselves at an entertainment given by the King of

Westphalia ; and that the supernumeraries, at fourpence a-night, are all gentlemen of the bedchamber, and sticks, gold or silver.

To such base uses do we come at last ! I have seen some very sad and some very strange vicissitudes of this kind : one occurs to me as I write, with a queer, sad significancy. There is at this day and this hour, in the lunatic hospital of Dublin—Swift's—a double significance in that fact,—a carved oak bench, massive and portly, on which the madmen sit and chat ; and this was one of the Peers' benches in the Irish House of Lords, and on this very bench where these lunatics are now sitting, sat certain predecessors of theirs—I'll not be rude—and voted the " Union."

But so goes the world, and so it ought to go, nor should the lesson be lost upon us ; with regard to these things, we make our idols, which become lumber in a second generation, and firewood in a third. What led me to think of these matters was neither the King of Westphalia, nor Swift's hospital. It was an account I read the other day, in a newspaper, of a certain clergyman of the Established Church, whose pleasure it is to dress in the most unseemly, unwholesome, and uncleanly of all costumes—the Friar's, and to call himself Father Ignatius. That any man with a dislike to brown Windsor, and a taste for absurdity, should desire to indulge these leanings, is not very

important. There are thirty-two millions of us, and we can reasonably spare a few fools. What I object to is, that a nation which assumes to take the lead in modern civilisation, and which, with reason, asserts the claim to the purest form of religious belief, should, at the very moment when all Catholic Europe cries aloud against the iniquities of the Papal system, and the corruptions of Rome—should, I say, take that very moment to offer sanctuary to the bigotry of that Church, multiply its religious foundations, circulate its doctrines, and, worse even than these, standing within the pale of a purer faith, mimic its masquerade absurdities, and imitate its fantastic forms.

Is it probable, I ask, that in an age when chemistry and metallurgy are understood as they now are, a joint-stock company could be formed to discover the philosopher's stone? And it is precisely in the face of all modern investigation, when the treacheries of Rome have met their widest and fullest refutation, her mock miracles been exposed, her cruelties unmasked, that these men come forward, with all the mummery of an absurd dress, to tell us that we must go back centuries for our civilisation, and revert to habits and ways which can only be palliated on the plea of a hard necessity and a rough era.

Is it when Rome will be no longer tolerated by Catholic Europe—is it when kidnapped children and

hired assassins are the objects of interest to cardinals and monsignori—when every corruption of all the bad governments on earth are massed into one system—when tyranny is not satisfied with common cruelties, but seeks to sow the poison of distrust, suspicion, and dislike through the channels of private life—when men have come to see, in fact, that with such a Church in action all liberty is vain, all the gains of freedom nugatory,—is it then, I ask, England is to say, “Come to me—you are too cruel for Italy, too coarse for France; your practices outrage even patient and long-enduring Germany; but I’ll receive you!”

The countries which have endured you for centuries, and into whose institutions you have wound yourself so craftily, that to detach you from the stones is to threaten the edifice, will endure you no longer; at any sacrifice and at any peril you must be got rid of. No matter, come to us, we are a very tolerant people—we are intensely unsuspicious. Our self-importance, indeed, disarms our suspicion, for we think ourselves too great and too rich and too powerful to be attacked by any one. “What!” cries John Bull, “am I to be frightened because a few grimy monks and ill-favoured old damsels, in unbecoming headgear, come and settle here? Let them come, by all means—let them raise their monasteries and build

their chapels—what can all their efforts do in the midst of our glorious institutions, our free press, and our ever-coming Reform Bill?” Be it so, with all my heart. But these lazy, lounging humbugs are not so harmless as their sloth, their dirt, and their indolence would bespeak them. They now and then get a footing in families. There is something in their abject humility—I cannot say what—that women like. They insinuate their doctrines in the very act of their mendicancy, and when taking the housewife’s potatoes give back some of their own poison. A very steady, though not strong, propagand is in progress amongst you, and if it give you serious trouble one day, you have but yourselves to blame. At all events—I am here only digressing—but, at all events, suffer no deserters to stand in your ranks, outraging your discipline, and calumniating your organisation.

This Father Ignatius—this man of the ragged raiment and bare feet—assumes to belong to your Church. Now, in what state of discipline does that Church exist if a grotesque mummer is to stand within its pale, and by his very presence profane its ordinances? Are these evils incurable, or are bishops only too lax or too indifferent to repress them? With whom the fault? If Lynch law were to become popular, Barons of the Exchequer would have to look

to it. The public would certainly not do the work, and pay others for standing idle. Let the Church take the lesson. If absurd pantomimists of religion are left to be dealt with by the people, there may come the question, What do we want with the bishops?

When the haughty demand was once made to a Pope, on showing him the mailed armour worn by one of his bishops, "Is this your son's coat or not?" the claim to the militant churchman had to be abandoned; and I should much like to ask his Grace of Canterbury since when has dirt become a Protestant ordinance? which of the Articles forbids soap? and where is the rubric that enjoins a minister of the Church to make himself the laughing-stock of the gay, and the grief and shame of the serious?

If this man's opinions, his mode of life, his outward show, be in conformity with the Church, say so: it will be matter of great comfort to some unwashed and unkempt thousands abroad, whom foreign Governments are hunting out of their territories as so many vermin, to know that free and enlightened England cherishes and invites them.

Statesmen have often remarked, that the mother country has frequently shown herself more tolerant than the colonies. Here is an instance at once in

point:—Australia demurs to receive convicts at the very moment that England offers a welcome to mohaired monks and barefooted Benedictines. If I were a statesman, I'd offer a compromise: I would send the friars to Swan River, and keep our native scoundrels at home.

ABOUT DOCTORS.

I READ in the French papers, under the heading "Interesting to Physicians," that a Doctor has been sentenced to fine and imprisonment for having divulged the malady of a patient, and in this way occasioned him heavy injury.

Without for a moment questioning the justice of this conviction, it appears to me a curious trait of our age and manners that such a case should ever have come to trial at all. That we make our revelations to the Doctor under the seal of secrecy, is intelligible enough; but that the law should confirm the bond is, I own, something new to me. In the honourable confidence between the Doctor and his patient I have never recognised anything beyond the trustfulness so essential to a beneficial result. The Doctor seeks to cure, and the patient to be cured, and for this reason all concealment that might mar or impede this end

would be foolish and injurious ; and it is not easy to imagine any amount of *amour propre* that would peril health—perhaps life—for the mere gratification of its peculiar vanity. The French Code, however, takes care that this question should not be left to a mere mutual understanding, but actually places the Doctor in the position of a Confessor, who is bound under no circumstances to divulge the revelations that are made to him.

It is certainly a proud thought to feel that in the class and status of our medical men in England we have a security far stronger than a statute could confer. I cannot call to mind a single case where a complaint of this kind has been heard,—and all from the simple fact, that with us Doctors were gentlemen before they were physicians, and never forgot to be so after.

It is not perhaps the loftiest, but it is the most practical way to put the point—that in the market-price of any commodity we have the truest estimate of its value. Now, between the Doctor whose fee is a guinea and him whose honorarium is two francs, there is an interval in social position represented by that between the two sums. The one, so far as culture, habits, tone of thought, and manners go, is the equal of any he visits ; the other is—very often at least—about as well-bred as your valet.

The one is a gentleman, with whom all intercourse is easy and unconstrained ; the other a sort of hybrid very often between cultivation and savagery, with whom it is not easy to say how you are to treat, and who is by no means unlikely to misinterpret every revelation of habits totally unlike all that he is himself accustomed to.

Now there can be no over-estimating the value of a congenial Doctor. Instead of dreading the hour of the visit, picturing it to our minds as the interval of increased suffering and annoyance, to feel it as the sunny spot of our day—the pleasantest break in the long languor of the sick-bed—is a marvellous benefit.

This, I am bold to say, is essentially to be found in England above all other countries. George IV., who was a consummate tactician in conversation,—all the disparaging estimates of him that have been formed—and some of them I firmly believe to have been unfair—have never denied him this gift,—used to say that Doctors were essentially the pleasantest talkers he had ever met. They have that happy blending of knowledge of actual life with book-learning, which makes them thorough men of the world, without the unpleasing asperity that pertains to those who have bought their experiences too dearly. For, be it remembered, few men see more

of the best side of human nature than the Doctor ; and it is an unspeakable advantage to get an insight into the secrets of the heart, and yet not to have attached any stain to one's self in the pursuit, and, even while investigating a moral pestilence, never to have risked the perils of a contagion.

If it were not that I should be incurring in another form the very defect from whose taint I believe Doctors to be exempt, I could tell some curious instances in which the physician obtained knowledge of intentions and projects in the minds of great statesmen, of which they had not at the time fully determined, but were actually canvassing and balancing—weighing the benefit and counting the cost—and one syllable about which they had never dropped to a colleague.

What a benefit is it to have a body of men like this in a country where political action is so easy to discount into gold, and where the certainty of this enactment or the repeal of that could resolve itself into fortune to-morrow ! Nor is it small praise to a profession when we can say that what in other lands is guarded by legal enactment, and fenced by the protection of the tribunals, can be, and is, in our country, left to the honourable feeling and right-hearted spirit of true gentlemen.

There is another service Doctors have rendered

society, and I declare I have never found it either acknowledged or recognised. Of all men, there are none so vigilantly on the watch to protect the public from that pestilence of humbug and deceit which, whether it call itself spiritualism, mesmeric agency, clairvoyance, or any other fashionable trickery of the day, has now resolved itself into a career, and has assumed all the outward signs and dignities of a profession.

To all these the Doctor is the sworn foe, and very frequently to his personal detriment and loss. Who has not heard at the dinner-table or the fireside the most outrageous assertions of phenomena, alleged to be perfectly in accordance with natural laws, but of which experience only records one instance or two perhaps in five or six centuries, met by the calm wisdom of the physician, the one man present, perhaps, able to explain the apparent miracle or refute the palpable absurdity? It has been more than once my own fortune to have witnessed such controversy, and I have never done so without a sense of gratitude that there were disseminated throughout every walk of our social system these upright and honest guardians of truth.

It would be a very curious and a very subtle subject for inquiry, to investigate the share of the Doctors in the political education of society. The

men who go everywhere, mix with all ranks and gradations of men, talk with each of them on the topics of the day, learning how class and condition influence opinions and modify judgments, must gain an immense insight into the applicability of any measure, and into its bearing on the different gradations of society. With this knowledge, too, they must be able to disseminate their own ideas with considerable power, and enforce their own opinions by arguments derived from various sources, doing these things, not through the weight and power of a blind obedience, as the priest might, but by force of reason, by the exercise of a cultivated understanding aided by especial opportunity. If I were a statesman, I would cultivate these men. I say this in no sense that implies corruption, but I would regard them as an immense agency in the government of mankind ; and I would take especial pains to learn their sentiments on measures which touch the social relations of the world, and secure, so far as I might, their honourable aid and co-operation.

They have replaced the Priest in that peculiar confidence men accord to those who are theirs, not by blood or kindred, but by the operation of that mysterious relationship that unites relief to suffering.

I say, again, I would cultivate the Doctors. They see more, hear more, and know more than other

men, and it would be my task to make them the channels of opinion on the interesting topics of the day, by extending to them the amplest confidence and the freest access to information.

I would open to them every avenue to the truth, every access to the formation of correct judgment, and leave the working of the system—and leave it with all confidence—to what I believe, and assert to be, their unimpeachable honour and integrity.

ON CERTAIN DROLL PEOPLE.

I WISH there was a society for the suppression of our droll people. Don't mistake me: I do not mean veritable wits—men of infinite jest, gossip, and humour—but the so-called drolls, who say dry things in a dry voice, relate stories dramatically, give imitations, and occasionally sing songs. Most cities have three or four of these, and drearier adjuncts to social stupidity I know not. First of all, these creatures have their entertainments as “cut and dried” as any stage-player. There is nothing spontaneous, nothing of *apropos*, about them. What they say or sing has been written for them, or by them, it matters not which; and in the very fact that they can go on repeating it for years, you have the measure of their capacity and their taste.

I suspect that the institution is an English one—at least, I cannot at this moment remember having

ever met one of these people either German, French, Italian, or Spanish. No other nation, I am certain, would endure the infliction but our own. It must be to a people hopelessly unable to amuse themselves, longing for some pastime without knowing what it should be, and trained to believe the Adelphi or the Strand amusing, that these insufferable bores could possibly be welcome.

Our English attempts at fun are, like our efforts at statuary, very ungainly and awkward, and only productive of laughter and ridicule. We are a dry, grave, occasionally humoristic people, and so intently bent on the practical, that we require an illustration to be as efficient as the thing it typifies—that is, we want the shadow to be as good flesh and bone as the substance. Our droll is therefore a great boon to us; “he makes me laugh,” is an expression compounded of three parts self-esteem and one part contempt. It is the last word of the helplessness of him who never yet amused any one, and has yet an expression of disparagement for the effort made to interest himself. Yet is the droll in request. Without him how is the dreary evening party to be carried through? How is that hour to be reached when it is meet for people to say “good-night,” without any show of the weariness that weighs on them?

How are the incongruous elements of society to be

amalgamated without this reconciling ingredient, who, at least, inspires one sentiment in common amongst them—a sincere contempt for himself? We have agreed in England that the man who condescends to please us must be more or less of an adventurer. Nobody with any honest calling or decent means of livelihood would think of being amusing. From this axiom it comes that the drolls are ever taken from the hopeless categories of mankind ; and thus, in the same spirit with which we give all the good music to the devil, we devote the profession of wit to the poorest intelligences amongst us. Drolls are therefore depreciated—depreciated, but cultivated. Our tone is, have them and maltreat them. Now, I wonder what would take place in Great Britain if the drolls were to combine and strike work—declare that they knew their social claims, and felt their own importance—that until some more liberal treatment should be secured them by law, not another joke should be uttered, not the shadow of a *bon mot* be detected. Dinners, *déjeûners*, picnics, and routs, might go on, with what material resources cookery, confectionery, and a cellar could provide, but as regards the most ethereal elements there would be a famine. Why, dancing without music would be nothing to it. The company might just as well try to be their own orchestra as their own jester. And is not this a most

humiliating avowal! Here you are, a party, let us say, of sixteen souls ranged round a dinner-table. You are well fed and well ministered to, and yet somehow the thing flags. The talk is *per saltum*—broken and in jets; there is no movement, no *ensemble*, for somehow you want the hardihood of a certain social adventurer, who will “go in” recklessly to assert something, contradict something, or explain something, with a dash of indifference as to consequences that will inspire the rest with some of his own hardihood. The great thing is to shock Mrs Grundy; till that be done, her sway is indisputable. This man is quite prepared for such a service. He has a shot that will startle her; he has a story that will stun her. Now, I ask, where, out of the professional ranks, are you to meet with these qualities? and if you really want them—if they be a requirement of your age and your social system, why—I ask again—why not have them of the best? why not secure the good article, instead of putting up with the poor counterfeit? It is for this reason I say, Suppress your present drolls, and make a profession of it.

There may come an age in which lawyers will defend prisoners without a fee, and physicians go forth to cure the sick unrewarded. In such a glorious millennium, droll people will doubtless be

found ready to be witty without being fed. Till this blessed time shall arrive, however, let us provide for human wants with human foresight. Our age is a hard-pressed, overworked age. We come daily to our homes jaded, wearied, and exhausted ; our money-seeking is a hard fight, and leaves us very tired towards the close of the day's battle. We find, then, that we need a refresher after it—a sort of moral “schnaps”—that may rally us into that condition in which enjoyment becomes possible. To this end, therefore, do I say, let us not destroy our healthy appetite by a corrupted or adulterated liquor. Let, in fact, the wits who are to amuse us be really wits—no amateur performers, no dilettanti “Drolls,” but trained, tried, and approved practitioners—licentiates in humour, duly qualified to practise in the best society—men who would no more repeat a known anecdote than Francatelli would reheat a cutlet. Trained in all the dialectics of the dinner-table, such men know the exact amount of talk that can be administered during a course ; and, in their marvellous tact, are they able to regulate the discursive conversationalists around them, giving time and emphasis and accent, just as Costa imposes these qualities over an unruly orchestra.

It is an inconceivable mistake to commit the task of amusing to the book-writers. Men who are much

versed in the world's affairs have really little time for reading—they read hastily, and judge imperfectly; we want, therefore, a society who shall disseminate the popular topics of the day—not carelessly or inaccurately, but neatly, appropriately, and exactly—able to condense a debate into the time of the soup, or give a sketch of a popular novel in the space of an *entrée*. What a savour and relish would such men impart to society! The mass of people talk very ill. They talk loosely—loosely as to fact, and more loosely as to expression. They mistake what they read, mistake what they hear, not from wilfulness, but out of that sloppy insipid carelessness which is assumed to be a feature of good-breeding—accuracy being to the men of fashion about as vulgar an attribute as haste or hurry. Now, the example of a professional talker will have great influence in suppressing this dreary inanity.

I know—I am well aware—that what I propose will be a deathblow to “haw-haw,” and a fatal injury to “you know;” but who regrets them? Is it not a generation which has grieved us long enough? Have they not lowered the national credit for pleasantries to the verge of bankruptcy? Are we not come to that pass that we must repudiate our droll people, or consent to be deemed the stupidest nation in Christendom?

Add to the Civil Service Commission, then, an examination for diners-out. Make a pursuit, a regular career, of the practice, and see what abilities and what excellences you will attract to it. Abandoning conversation to pretenders, is like leaving medicine to the quacks or theology to the street-preachers. I have seen a deal of life, and you may take my word for it, amateurs never attain any high excellence, except it be in wickedness !

A HINT TO POSTAGE-STAMP COLLECTORS.

THE French have an adage, that “*tous les goûts sont respectables*,” which must be a great comfort to many people, but to none that I know of more than that innocent section of mankind who make it their business to collect postage-stamps. What these people of much leisure and little ingenuity mean by it I never could make out! Have they discovered any subtle acid, any cunning process, by which the stamp of disqualification can be effaced, and are they enabled to cheat the Treasury by a re-issue? This would be a grave impugment of their honesty, it is true; but while thus accusing their hearts it would vindicate their heads.

They might, perhaps, have heard of that famous Dutch doctor who made a great fortune by buying up all the sick and disabled negroes in the West Indies, and, having cured, resold them, very often to

their former masters, who never recognised, in the plump and grinning Sambo, the wretched object he had "cast" a few months before and sold off as a screw. Though the philanthropic portion of this device—and it is the gem of its virtue—could not certainly be applied to the postage-stamp question, all the profitable elements offer a great similarity. With even my very limited knowledge of these collectors, however, I am far from imputing to them such intentions. I am certain that the pursuit is a most harmless one; and if I cannot vindicate it on higher grounds, I am ready to maintain its innocence.

Let me, however, ask, What is meant by it? Is it the intention to establish a cheap portrait-gallery of living princes and rulers? Is it to obtain, at a minimum cost, the correct face and features of the men who sway the destinies of their fellow-men? If so, the coinage, even in its basest form, would be infinitely preferable. The most battered penny that ever was bartered for a gill of blue ruin is better as a medallion than is the smudged and semi-glutinous bit of dirty stamp as a print. But, I ask, whose face, amongst all the kings and kaisers, do we want to know better or more intimately than we have them in 'Punch'?

If you want living resemblances, there is a "Com-

missioner" every day at Whitehall the very image of Victor Emmanuel; and as for Louis Napoleon, I'll show you six French Emperors any day you please, within ten minutes, in Holywell Street. Would you desire the Queen of Spain?—but let us not be ungallant. And now, again, I say, what curiosity can any reasonable being have to possess the commonplace effigies of the most commonplace-looking people in Europe?

If this postage-stamp mania were instructive in any way—were it even suggestive—I could understand it; but it seems to me the very bleakest pursuit that ever engaged dreary heads and gummy fingers.

Had these stamps borne some heraldic device, for instance, it might have been in a certain small way contributory to a knowledge of national distinctions; and on seeing that the Belgian emblem was, like the English, a Lion, one might have appreciated the difference by remembering that the former always carries "his tail between his legs."

In the same way the double-headed eagle of Austria might seem to emblematisè a certain duplicity in policy that an ungenerous public is so apt to attribute to that empire. But, I say, there are no such lessons for us. These scraps of blurred and adhesive nastiness display nothing but a gallery of

European ugliness, which we are only reconciled to by remembering that they are obliged to intermarry.

But once more : if the object be to have some reminder of mighty potentates and powers, why not hit upon something more characteristic and more distinctive than this ? And easy to do so. Is it not certain that all sovereigns, however little use of them they may make, occasionally wear shoes and boots ? Why not make a collection of the old ones when they are cast-offs ? I take it that even that thrifty prince the ex-Duke of Modena does not go beyond twice soling and vamping, and that something must remain, which, if not available for a march, might be useful in a museum.

Surely Louis Napoleon must have many pairs besides those he gives to Victor Emmanuel ; and imagine what a treasure would be one of the Pope's old slippers, sanctified by the countless kisses of true believers ! Think of the pride of a collector in showing the jack-boot with which the Emperor Nicholas kicked one of his marshals ; or the shoes in which President Lincoln ran away from Washington when he heard of Lee's advance ! And should we descend to smaller "deer" and extend the collection to great celebrities, it might be curious to have a sight of that pair of Lord Russell's "high-lows"

which Mr Disraeli tried on in '59, and found he couldn't walk in.

In a word, shoes might be eminently suggestive, and there is no end to the speculation one would be led into by a critical examination of the wearer's mode of walking—whether he went gingerly on his toes like the French Emperor, stamped like a Czar, or shuffled like his Holiness.

In the King of Prussia's case we should, I am certain, find that he had occasionally got his "Bluchers" on the wrong foot, and that Victor Emmanuel's progress was considerably impeded by his attempts to wear some pairs that were ordered for the Duke of Tuscany and the King of Naples, and even a pair of satin slippers of the Princess of Parma's.

Nor would it be without its lesson to mark that, when in Poland, the Austrian Emperor never wore any but Russia leather.

Interesting, too, to see that pair of strong shoes the King of Italy ordered when he was thinking of walking to Rome, but which he countermanded when he found he should not go farther than Florence.

These, I say, would teach us something; and if there be sermons in stones, there might be homilies in shoes.

It is true every one could not so easily be a col-

lector of these as of postage-stamps, but they could be photographed, and in this way made available to the million. For all purposes of interest, and as matter for conversation, how much better would they be than these shabby and unsuggestive scraps of dirty paper! The Sultan's slippers would be a chapter of the Arabian Nights at once; and I am only withheld, by my characteristic discretion, from hinting at what wondrous interiors we might catch a glimpse of by slipping on that pair of Spanish boots with the red heels, and letting them lead our steps up certain back-stairs in the Escorial.

But I trust I have said enough to show that a great mine of psychological investigation has yet to be worked, and a most interesting museum to be formed, without entailing any heavy cost or charge, but simply bearing in mind the time-honoured apophthegm, that there is "nothing like leather."

THE PEOPLE WHO COME LATE.

WILL any one tell me who are the people who habitually come late to dinner? Are they merely erratic, abnormal instances, or are they, as I opine, a class? Any treatment that we may adopt towards them should mainly depend on to which category they belong.

While Thuggee prevailed in India, it was a considerable time before it was ascertained that men were banded together for assassination. It seemed so horrible, that nothing short of an overwhelming conviction would have induced one to accept it as a fact. At last, however, the whole organisation was revealed, and it was shown that men were led into this fearful compact, not through menace or threat, but of their own free will, and actually, at times, with a zeal and eagerness that savoured of insanity. Now, I am curious to know if our social destroyers be

Thugs. Are they members of a secret society banded together to interfere with human happiness, and render what ought to be the pleasantest portion of our lives, periods of anxiety, irritation, and discomfort?

I have given the matter much consideration, for I have been taught some cruel experiences of its hardships, and I incline to believe that these men are really a distinct section of society—that they regard life from the same point of view, take the same estimate of their own social claims, and almost invariably adopt the same tactics in their dealings with the world.

The story of Alcibiades and his dog has another reading from that usually accorded it. When that clever man upon town cut a piece off his dog's tail to divert the scandal-mongers of Athens from attending to his more serious derelictions, he showed how thoroughly he understood the fact, that men of eminence will ever be exposed to the libellous tongues of the smaller people around them, and that it is a wise policy to throw out for them some bait, in the pursuit of which they may lose sight of more important booty.

But there are folk who have no resemblance whatever to Alcibiades—who are neither clever, nor witty, nor genial, nor amusing; and when *they* cut an inch

off their dog's tail, they do it simply and purely that, by this small singularity, they may attract to themselves a degree of notice which nothing in their lives or characters could possibly warrant; they do it that they may be in men's mouths for a passing moment, and enjoy the notoriety they imagine to be fame.

It is to this category your late man belongs. He calculates coolly on the ills his want of punctuality produces—the vexation, the dreariness, the *ennui*. He ponders over the irritation of the host and weariness of the guests; he feels that he has driven a cook to the verge of despair, and made an intended pleasure a positive penalty; he knows well how he will be canvassed by the company, his merits weighed, and his claims discussed, and that the “finding” will not be the decision of an over-favourable jury; and yet is he repaid for all the censure and detraction that awaits him—for every question as to his status and every doubt of his capacity—by the single fact that he has made himself important. Great crimes have been committed through no other incentive than the insensate passion for notoriety, and it is the self-same desire of small minds that leads to the offence I stigmatise. These creatures, unable to amuse, incapable to interest, without even one of the qualities that have an attraction for society, are still able, by merely interfering with the

pleasure of others, to make themselves remembered and noteworthy.

That I am not unwarrantably severe on them, I appeal to all who either give dinners or eat those of their friends. To the former I ask, and ask confidently, Are not the people who keep you waiting almost invariably the least valued of your acquaintance? Is not the man who arrives late, the man who need not arrive at all? Has the creature who has destroyed the fish and ruined the *entrée*, one, even one, quality to indemnify you for the damage?

Take the late men of your acquaintance, and answer me, Have you ever met one of them able, by the charm of his converse or the captivation of his manners, to obliterate the memory of the dreary forty-five minutes your friends sat in the condemned cell of your drawing-room, longing for the last pang to be over?

If your experiences be happy in this respect, *mine* are not. I openly proclaim that my late men are the bores of my acquaintance. Tardy in coming, and drearier when they come, they open the curious question, whether one would be sorrier if they died, or more miserable that they are alive?

If any doubt could be entertained as to the studied intention of this practice, it is at once dispelled by the mode of the late man's *entrée*. It is not in the

least like *his* approach whose coming has been delayed by some unfortunate mischance or some unforeseen casualty: there is no confusion, no eager anxiety to explain or apologise. Far from it: he makes a sort of triumphal entry, and, with chest protruded and head erect, declares the pride he feels in being of sufficient consequence to have curdled the milk of human kindness in some dozen natures, and converted a meeting for pleasure into a penalty and a suffering.

Next to these in point of annoyance are they who send you their apologies an hour before your dinner, and they too are a class—a distinctly organised class. These people forget that in all dinners worth the name, the company are apportioned as carefully as the crew of a racing-boat, and you can no more add to than diminish their number. The quality of the “bow oar” cannot be transferred to the “stroke,” nor can two be seated on one bench, or one place be left vacant. To destroy the symmetry of your dinner—the “trim,” so to say, of the company—is a serious offence, and doubly so when committed with prepense and malice aforethought; and yet there are people who do this, on the same calculation as the “Late comers,” that they may enjoy the importance of being arraigned for their absence, and revel in the consciousness that the company they could not have

charmed by their presence has been totally damped and dispirited by their absence—for so is it, nothing short of superhuman geniality can conquer the gloom of an empty place.

I remember once—it was a long time ago—a dinner in an Irish country-house, of which an Archbishop was to have formed the great gun. Besides his Episcopal dignity he was a man of weight and influence, which gave him a standing in the country it behoved county members to look to. He was also a great horticulturist, and fond of country life and pursuits. Our host understood well all these varied claims, and took great pains to make his dinner-party of such material as might best consort with his great guest's humour. What, however, was his discomfiture to find that his Grace's chaplain arrived to make the Archbishop's apologies, and convey his sincere regret at some untoward impediment to the promised pleasure! He brought with him, however, an enormous gourd or pumpkin grown in the Episcopal hothouse; and this, with an air of well-assumed admiration, our host directed should be placed in the chair which his Grace ought to have occupied, directing to the comely vegetable much of his talk during the dinner; and when the time of coffee came, saying as they arose, "In all my experience of his Grace, I never knew him so agreeable as to-day."

We are not, however, all of us able to pay off, by a smart epigram like this, our dreary defaulters; and I own I feel a deep humiliation at the thought of how much pleasure, how much social enjoyment, how much actual happiness, is at the disposal of people who can contribute so wonderfully little to them all.

There is another feature of the case not to be entirely overlooked. In the deference you show by waiting for the late comer, or in your distress at the absence of him who comes not at all, your other guests fancy they detect some deep sense of obligation to the man who usurps so much of authority over you, and they infer at once that he is your patron or your protector, that he has lent you money or dragged you out of some awkward scrape or other, and that you are bound over, under the very heaviest of recognisances, to treat him with all deference and respect.

I am certain that I have suffered once or twice in my life, if not oftener, from this pleasant imputation, and it has obliged me to curtail my madeira at dinner lest I should be seized with an apoplexy.

In England, I believe, there is no hour for dinner. Your eight o'clock may be half-past, may be nine, perhaps ten; but abroad, over the Continent generally, the hour named is the hour really intended, and

especially so at Embassies and Legations, so that the London *insouciance* of arriving within three-quarters of an hour of the time is simply bad manners or ignorance. I rejoice to say that the impertinence of the late man would meet no toleration there. Short of royalty, or something like its representative, none would be waited for ; but still, to be peremptory in such matters, one must be a man of a certain mark or standing. The Minister can do with dignity what in the Secretary would be pedantry or pretension ; and, in fact, in small things as well as in great, it is very pleasant to stand on a high rung of the ladder called life.

They who so stand have the law in their own hands ; and I own I rejoice whenever I witness its severe administration, and mark the shame and confusion with which a late man shuffles to his place amongst the seated guests, and tries to cover by an apology that which he had planned to execute as a triumph.

We had an old Irish Chief-Baron once, whose practice it was to have the late arrivals shown into a room where a dessert was laid out, and informed that dinner was over, and the company had assembled in the drawing-room. In this way they might reflect over dried figs and filberts, and realise to their own conscience-stricken intelligences the enormity of the offence.

I may close this by a malapropos which once occurred to Lord Ponsonby at Vienna. He was to dine at Prince Metternich's, but arrived by some mischance very late. There was, however, one more guest yet to come, Baron Seebach, the Saxon Minister, with whom the hostess was very intimate. She was exceedingly shortsighted; and as Lord Ponsonby came forward, not catching his name, and believing him to be Seebach, she met him abruptly, and cried out, "Oh! vieux scélérat, pourquoi est-ce que vous venez si tard?" It need not be said what were the shame and confusion on either side.

I conclude now with the hope that, if I have not made the late man punctual, I have at least persuaded his host that he ought not to wait for him.

GOING INTO PARLIAMENT.

LOOKING out at life from the very narrow loophole at which I sit, I scarcely like to affirm anything very positively; but, so far as I am able to see, it seems to me that I never remember a time in which so many men aspired to public life as the present. There were always, and I trust there always will be, a large class to whom Parliament will be a natural and suitable ambition. The House of Commons has the proud prerogative of representing every interest of the kingdom. The landowner, the millowner, the man of ships, the man of mines, the friend of Exeter Hall, the advocate of the Pope. Even crotchets and caprices have their members; and there are men who tinker about street-organs or licences to oyster-cellars, but who really, as they consume their own smoke, are small nuisances, and may easily be endured. Even bores are represented in Parliament;

and if the Brothers Davenport only live long enough amongst us, there is no reason why Mr Howitt, for instance, should not stand up in the House to represent the spiritual interests of the nation. I like all this. I am certain that at the price of listening to an enormous amount of twaddle we purchase safety. One Idea would be a very troublesome and cantankerous fellow if you would not let him talk, but with his free speech he is happy, and, better still, he is innocuous. However silly his project be, he is so certain to make it sillier by his advocacy of it, that it is right good policy to invite him to explain himself.

It would be hard, too, to deny a man who has contested his borough, borne the fag and the rough usage, the abuse, the insult, and the heavy cost of a contested election, the small privilege of hearing himself say "Sir" to the Speaker, though the shuffling sound of departing feet should make the sentence that followed inaudible. This, however, is a costly privilege; it is essentially the luxury of the rich man; for since we have taken such immense precautions against bribery, a seat in Parliament has become a far more expensive thing than ever it was before. The apparent paradox admits of an easy explanation. Have you not once or twice, if not oftener, in life drunk excellent claret in some remote country-house, where the owner's means were cer-

tainly not equal to such a luxury? The reason was, the duties were high, and the smuggler found it worth while to evade them. The reduced tariff, however, cut off the contraband, and though the legal article was cheaper, it never came so low in price as the "run" one. There is therefore now less smuggling into the House; but even the low duty is too high for the poor man.

This circumstance it is which makes it the more incomprehensible to me:—when men, whose fortunes I am well aware are small, and whose positions would seem to call for every exercise of energy and industry, lounge into my room and tell me "they are going into Parliament." If these were all, or if even a fair number of them were, very clever fellows—well read, well grounded, with good memories, fluent of speech, endowed with much tact, and a happy address—I might say, though not exactly born to be statesmen, they might find a career in public life. The discipline of a government requires so many petty officers, that there is nothing unreasonable in such men expecting to be sergeants and corporals. The House, too, is a rare club; its gossip is the best gossip, its interests are the best interests, even its jobs and intrigues are finer, grander, better games of skill than any that ever engaged the wits and tried the temper of gamblers. I cannot imagine a

sphere in which ability was so sure to have its legitimate sway and swing.

One cannot conceive a place, except it be the playground of a great school, where fair play is so sure to be the rule and practice. It is the one spot on earth where the weak cannot be browbeaten, and the strong cannot be a tyrant. It is the only arena the world has ever witnessed, wherein right-mindedness has obtained the force of talent, and mere honesty can hold its own against any odds in ability. I admit at once how proud a thing it is to belong to such an assemblage, and I only ask that the men who aspire to it should have something in proportion to the pretension. I mean that it is not enough that they have failed as barristers—broken down as novelists—been bankrupt as speculators, or unfortunate in any other career in life—that they should come here. The House of Commons is neither a reformatory nor an asylum. It was never intended to recall the wandering sheep of politics to the pleasant pasturages of office, or prove a refuge for the forlorn castaways—the street-walkers of the learned professions.

Johnson called patriotism the last refuge of a scoundrel. What if Parliament were to become the last resource of incapacity! I earnestly hope this may not be so. I ardently desire that other men's

experiences may not be as my experiences. I long to think that the dreary creatures who come to show me the "twaddle" they have written to the free and independent electors of Snugborough, are not a widespread pestilence, but a small local disease invented for my especial torment. What mornings have I passed, listening to their opinions on currency, on the colonies, on the Catholics! what they would do about church-rates—how they would deal with the franchise. These are the aspiring creatures who mean to be terrible to Gladstone, and thorns in the side of Disraeli. There are others who vow themselves to committee life—who mean to pass their days in the smaller shrines of politics, and only pray to the saints who preside over railway rogueries and the speculations of public works. Last of all, there are the "Dundrearies" of statecraft, who know nothing themselves, nor ever knew any one who did—who want to be in the House because it is the right thing, and who feel about politics as did the Bourgeoisie Gentilhomme about prose—it was a fine thing to be talking it even unconsciously. These men, by some strange fatality, always speak of the achievement as an easy one. They know a "fellow" who can get them in for eight hundred or a thousand; and they tell you little anecdotes of electioneering

rogueries you have often read in print, as part of the personal experiences of "the fellow" aforesaid. I own these men try me sorely, and even the bland temper with which nature has endowed me is at moments driven to its last intrenchments. The affected contempt they assume for public life—the tone of "rogues all" they put on with respect to men in power, and the levity with which they treat responsibilities that the strongest are seen to stagger under—these are the things that push my patience to its limits.

It is all very well to say that if these men entered the House we should never hear of them; that they would be as completely ignored as if they sat in the reporters' gallery. Be it so; but I ask, Why should they be there at all? why should they aspire to be there? What fatal tendency of our age inclines men to adopt a career in all respects unsuited to them? When Pitt said of our octogenarian generals, "I don't know what effect they produce on the enemy, but I know that they frighten *me*," he expressed what I very strongly feel about these small boys of politics—they fill me with fear and misgiving. The numbers of such men assuming airs of statecraft, talking of great questions, and identifying themselves and their small natures with measures

of moment, has the same effect in political life as the great issue of a depreciated paper currency has in finance. These are the greenbacks of public life; and as a general election is approaching, let me caution constituencies against making them a legal tender, or even for a moment supposing they are good as gold.

CONTINENTAL EXCURSIONISTS.

IN common with others of my countrymen who live much abroad, I have often had to deplore the unfair estimate of England that must be made by commenting on the singular specimens of man and woman-hood that fill the railroad trains, crowd the steamboats, and deluge the hotels of the Continent. How often have I had to assure inquiring foreigners that these people were not the *élite* of our nation! With what pains have I impressed upon them that these men and women represent habits and ways and modes of thought which a stranger might travel England in its length and breadth without once encountering, and that to predicate English life from such examples would be a grievous injustice!

This evil, however, has now developed itself in a form of exaggeration for which I was in no way prepared. It seems that some enterprising and un-

scrupulous man has devised the project of conducting some forty or fifty persons, irrespective of age or sex, from London to Naples and back for a fixed sum. He contracts to carry them, feed them, lodge them, and amuse them. They are to be found in diet, theatricals, sculpture, carved-wood, frescoes, washing, and roulette. In a word, they are to be "done for" in the most complete manner, and nothing called for on their part but a payment of so many pounds sterling, and all the details of the road or the inn, the playhouse, the gallery, or the museum, will be carefully attended to by this providential personage, whose name assuredly ought to be Barnum!

When I read the scheme first in a newspaper advertisement I caught at the hope that the speculation would break down. I assured myself that, though two or three unhappy and misguided creatures, destitute of friends and advisers, might be found to embrace such an offer, there would not be any real class from which such recruiting could be drawn. I imagined, besides, that the characteristic independence of Englishmen would revolt against a plan that reduces the traveller to the level of his trunk, and obliterates every trace and trait of the individual. I was all wrong: the thing has "taken"—the project is a success; and, as I write, the cities

of Italy are deluged with droves of these creatures, for they never separate, and you see them, forty in number, pouring along a street with their director—now in front, now at the rear—circling around them like a sheep-dog—and really the process is as like herding as may be. I have already met three flocks, and anything so uncouth I never saw before,—the men, mostly elderly, dreary, sad-looking, evidently bored and tired—the women, somewhat younger, travel-tossed and crumpled, but intensely lively, wide-awake, and facetious. Indeed, to judge from the continual sparkle of the eye and the uneasy quiver of the mouth, one would say that they thought the Continent was a practical joke, and all foreigners as good fun as anything at Astley's. When foreigners first inquired of me what this strange invasion might mean—for there was a sort of vague suspicion it had some religious propaganda in the distance—I tried to turn off the investigation by some platitude about English eccentricity, and that passion for anything odd that marks our nation. Finding, however, that my explanation was received with distrust, I bethought me of what pretext I could frame as more plausible, and at last hit upon what I flatter myself was ingenious.

I took the most gossip-loving of my acquaintances aside, and under a solemn pledge of secrecy, which I

well knew he would not keep, I told him that our Australian colonies had made such a rumpus of late about being made convict settlements, that we had adopted the cheap expedient of sending our rogues abroad to the Continent, apparently as tourists ; and that, being well dressed and well treated, the project found favour with the knaves, who, after a few weeks, took themselves off in various directions as taste or inclination suggested. In fact, said I, in less than ten days you'll not see three, perhaps, of that considerable party we met a while ago in the cathedral ; and then that fussy little bald man that you remarked took such trouble about them will return to England for more.

I cannot describe the horror with which he heard me—the scheme outdid in perfidy all that he had believed even of “*la perfide Albion* ;” but it was so like us, that much he must say. It was so selfish and so saving and so insolently contemptuous towards all foreign countries, as though the most degraded Englishman was still good enough company for the foreigner.

As I have since made a similar confidence to two others, my mind is relieved as to all the dire consequences of these invasions. Do not imagine that the remedy was too strong for the disease ; far from it. I tell you deliberately it will be all but impos-

sible to live abroad if these outpourings continue; for it is not merely that England swamps us with everything that is low-bred, vulgar, and ridiculous, but that these people, from the hour they set out, regard all foreign countries and their inhabitants as something in which they have a vested right. They have paid for the Continent as they paid for Cre-morne, and they *will* have the worth of their money. They mean to eat it and drink it and junket it to the uttermost farthing. When the cutlet is overdone, or the cathedral disappoints them, it is not merely unsatisfactory—it is a “do”—a “sell”—a swindle—just as if the rockets should refuse to go up at Vauxhall, or the Catherine-wheels to play. Europe, in their eyes, is a great spectacle, like a show-piece at Covent Garden; and it is theirs to criticise the performance and laugh at the performers at will.

Now, if *we* are not acquiring French and Italian, foreigners are learning English; and I must say the acquisition redounds to them in other ways than pleasure, for what mortifying and impertinent things do not these “drove Bulls” say of all and everything around them!

Is it without reason that I protest against these Barnumites who now crowd the *tables d'hôte* and fill the fiacres, and whose great unmeaning looks of wonder and stolidity meet one at every corner?

What a blessing it was for our ministers and envoys abroad that the passport system was abrogated before these people took to the road! Our legations abroad would otherwise be besieged like a union workhouse in a famine. One of the strangest peculiarities, too, of the vulgar Bull is his passion for talking what he believes to be French to his own minister or envoy on the Continent, whenever any accident may have brought them face to face.

One of our most distinguished diplomatists—a man whose reputation is now European—once told me that the ordinary work of his station was nothing compared with the worry, irritation, and annoyance he experienced from these people. He gave me an instance, too, and I rejoice to say that the victory did not, as is so often the case, lie with the Bore: “*Vous êtes Ministre d’Angleterre, I think,*” said a pompous-looking elderly Bull, who once made his way into a room where my friend was writing, with a boldness all his own. The Minister saw that he was a stranger, ignorant of the place and its ways, and asked him if he could do anything for his service.

“*Oui, oui—j’ai besoin——*”

“*I beg your pardon for interrupting; but as I am an Englishman, and you I apprehend to be another, let us talk English.*”

“*Oui, oui, je parle parfaitement.*”

“Pray, sir, say what is it you want in the vernacular.”

“J’ai besoin, passport.”

“For what place?”

“Je crois que j’irai——”

“Tell me, sir, the name of the place, and your own name.”

“Moi? Je m’appelle Richard Govens; mais il y a Madame Govens, trois Mademoiselles Govens, Monsieur Jacques et Joseph Govens, and le tuteur.”

“There—there, sir—you said Aix-la-Chapelle; do me the favour now to leave me to my own occupations. No—nothing to pay; good-morning.”

No; he was not to be got rid of thus easily, for he continued in the same vile jargon to explain that he was familiar with foreign usages, and long habituated to travel abroad; and it was only by the employment of very energetic language that my friend ultimately persuaded him to withdraw and go about his business.

Three days after this dreary interview, however, there came to the Minister a long letter, dated Aix-la-Chapelle, and written in that strange tongue the writer imagined to be French. It was evidently a demand for some service to be rendered—some favour to be accorded—but so mysteriously veiled was the request in the complexity of the style, that my friend

was totally unable to ascertain what had been asked of him. His reply, therefore, acknowledged the receipt of the epistle, and his inability to comprehend it. "I perceive, sir," continued he, "dimly and indistinctly indeed, that you wish me to do something for you, though what that something may be, the language of your request has totally obscured. I render you, however, the only service that appears to lie at my hands. I have corrected twenty-eight mistakes in the spelling, and seventeen in the grammar of your letter, which I now enclose, and have the honour to be," &c.

Though the pretentious tone of certain public speakers and occasional newspaper articles may deny it, the truth is, England has lost much of the influence she once possessed over Continental peoples. I know there are many ready to declare that they do not regret this. I am aware that the non-intervention policy has begotten a race of men who say, We want to trade with the foreigner, not to influence him. Let him buy our cottons and our cutlery, and we will not ask him to believe England a great country and its alliance a safeguard. I shall not contest these theses. I know enough of life never to dispute with people who are not mainly of my own opinion ; but I go back to what I have asserted as a fact, that England no longer holds the high place she once

held in the estimation of all nations of Europe ; and equally advisedly do I say, that a great deal of the depreciation we have incurred is owing to the sort of people who come abroad, and are deemed by foreigners to represent us.

We have all of us heard in what disrepute certain woollen fabrics of ours were held in foreign markets a few years ago, because some unprincipled manufacturers deluged the Continent with ill-woven ill-dyed cloths, so that the word English, which was once the guarantee for goodness, became the stamp of an inferior and depreciated article. So has it been with our travellers. These devil's-dust tourists have spread over Europe, injuring our credit and damaging our character. Their crass ignorance is the very smallest of their sins. It is their overbearing insolence, their purse-strong insistence, their absurd pretension to be in a place abroad that they had never dreamed of aspiring to at home,—all these claims suggesting to the mind of the foreigner that he is in the presence of very distinguished and exalted representatives of Great Britain !

As long as it was open to one to deal with individual cases, he could talk of "oddity," "eccentricity," "strange specimens," and the like ; but now they come in droves : what is to be done ? Europe may turn on us one day on account of these

“Raiders,” as America is well disposed to do at this moment. Foreigners may say, “We desire to be able to pray in our churches, to hear in our theatres, to dine in our restaurants, but your people will not permit us. They come over, not in twos and threes, but in scores and hundreds, to stare and to laugh at us. They deride our church ceremonies, they ridicule our cookery, they criticise our dress, and they barbarise our language. How long are we to be patient under these endurances?”

Take my word for it, if these excursionists go on, nothing short of another war and another Wellington will ever place us where we once were in the estimation of Europe.

ITALIAN FINANCIAL POLICY.

WHEN M'Guppy remonstrates with his friend for going to live at Whitechapel for economy, and astutely asks, What's the use of living cheap when one has nothing? he was enunciating the great guiding principle of Italian finance.

Here is a country immensely taxed, with an empty treasury, an enormous army, a costly fleet, her home resources undeveloped, her foreign credit a nullity, launching forth into the most extravagant expenditure on public works, and engaging in undertakings of a magnitude that few English ministers would have the hardihood to propose to a British House of Commons.

With a deficit annually of eight millions sterling, and her Five per Cents vacillating between 65 and 66, Italy contemplates the possibility of a great war with Austria, and prepares for the eventuality by a most wasteful and reckless expenditure.

In the old days of misgovernment taxation was low. One reason was, that the cost of protection fell upon the protector ; and if Austria bullied, she paid. There was little liberty, to be sure, but it cost little ; and one must know the Italians to understand how thoroughly they could appreciate a life of indolence that secured a number of small economies and little to think of.

With great ambitions came great outlay. Italy wanted to be a European Power, and she will have to pay for it.

The retrenchments that men expected after the conclusion of the war were rendered impossible to effect by the condition of the southern provinces. Calabria entailed a campaign, and the employment of from sixty to eighty thousand soldiers. Sicily was restless and discontented. She had never been called on by the conscription before, and submitted with an ill grace to this first demand of Italian unity. There was a widespread pauperism over the country generally, and little demand for labour ; and there was at the same time that most painful of all the symptoms of an awakened nationality—a universal looking to Government to provide remedies for every grievance and every shortcoming.

None of the wants of the new kingdom cried more piteously for aid than the demand for education.

There were certainly cares enough to have employed the most active hands and heads ; difficulties, too, to have taxed the most consummate skill in statecraft ; and along with these, mingled up and blended with each and all of them, was the greater difficulty, that the Government was obliged to popularise itself in the very crisis of the pressure. It was in the position of a candidate, who had all but ruined himself in a successful contest, being called on to feast his electors after the close of the poll.

The great public works were in reality little else than electioneering tactics. They were so many grants of public money to distant localities, whose discontent made conciliation a wise policy towards them.

It was necessary to satisfy the grumblers, and hence fabulous prices were given for worthless plots of ground ; ruinous old houses were bought at the cost of palaces ; and the most exorbitant demands were made and complied with for properties whose value was calculated on the presumed completion of the very undertakings for which they were purchased. Peculation had used to be a secret practice ; it now walked at large and in the noonday. With corruption so general, who could be the accuser ? Could the Minister who pocketed a hundred thousand francs by a coal contract arraign the wretched

subordinate who secreted a few hundreds by false tallies?

Such things, of course, occur everywhere; here the *novitas regni* made them simply more frequent.

The immense number of Government *employés* suddenly thrown upon the State from the Duchies and the Romagna became an intolerable burden.

In small states the whole business of life is conducted cheaply. They are like the humble families of social life, who spend next to nothing in "representation." The men who serve these Governments suffer no loss of station, no impairment of their just influence, that they live on small means and practise strict economies. The habits of the small capital they belong to are their standard. Linked, however, to the fortunes of a large kingdom, with higher ambitions and more pretentious expenditure, these men are driven to compare their own positions with those of their richer compeers, and the chief judge or prefect of Parma is unwilling to accept a status inferior to that of his colleague at Milan or Genoa.

As to the professors, their name is legion. Many of the lecture-rooms in the universities are never entered by a student; and more than once have I heard that, if a census were to be taken, it would be found that for each matriculated student in Italy

three professors have been provided and paid for by the State.

In this, as in everything else, unification has been a costly process. The absorption of many small households into one great establishment pictures the case exactly. Tuscany had her little retinue, so had Parma and Modena, and so, too, had the Romagna. All these had to be taken into the service of the State, and, what was still more difficult, to be pacified and satisfied.

To make the new kingdom popular was a costly proceeding, but there was no help for it. Italy was in the position of the famished dog, driven to eat an inch of his own tail to support existence.

Like one of those great commercial undertakings which, to secure success, must at once declare a high dividend, Italy had to start on her course with a fictitious prosperity, and declare her "shares were at a premium."

"The populations must be contented." Adhesions to the new order of things must be accomplished by the strong ties of personal interest. Men must be able to vouch for public prosperity by the safe gauge of their own success, and say, "Italy is doing well because *I* am."

This policy was a leaf from the Imperial notebook. The Italians saw how craftily the French

Emperor had pushed the credit of France into the position of capital, and by mere encouragement engaged the great energies of that wonderful people ; but there are not here either the enterprise or the energy of Frenchmen, nor is there at Turin that wise direction and skilful guidance which prevail at the Tuileries.

Another difficulty of Italian undertakings was the grand scale on which they were projected. The question never was, "What does Italy require?" but, "What will she require when Rome is her capital—when railroads will connect her cities of Genoa, Naples, and Venice—when her population will count nigh thirty millions—her standing army be four hundred thousand—her navy be the equal if not the superior of that of France?" Take the projected arsenal of Spezia, for instance. Examine its details and its plan, and say, would not such an undertaking be deemed colossal even for resources as rich as those of France and England? To convert a gulf of about nine miles in depth and some four or five in width into a naval depot is the idea. To make of a harbour that could hold all the navies of Europe and give them space enough to manœuvre, a dock, is the present project—to insure whose safety on the land side it will be necessary to fortify a line of more than thirty miles in extent, and secure, by works of con-

siderable strength, a vast number of mountain-passes.

This immense harbour has not alone to be fenced round and protected. Ships of the line, heavy iron-clads, and great frigates are to float where there is not now water for a cock-boat. Slips are to stand where granite cliffs now frown, and graving-docks are to be fashioned out of marble quarries. Such are the enormous difficulties to be undertaken, that the enumeration of them reads less like a reasonable project than one of those legendary stories in which a certain work was confided to the "Evil one" as a sure means of keeping him employed for centuries, if not indefinitely.

Nor least of all amongst the difficulties, these works are to be undertaken by men who have had no experience whatever of great public works; who never saw a dock or a breakwater; and who are as totally unacquainted with the details of directing as they are ignorant of all that regards the organisation of labour.

The Gulf of Spezia—not unlike, but much larger than, the Bay of Weymouth—is indented on every side by bays more or less deep, some of them admirably sheltered, and with water deep enough for a line-of-battle ship to lie close to the very rocks. Of these, more than one would have been well adapted for the

site of an arsenal fully capable of holding one hundred and fifty ships, and with every advantage which security and good anchorage can confer. Varignano, now well known to the world as the place of Garibaldi's imprisonment, is such. There there is a harbour made by nature, girt around by mountains that protect it from the north-west and westerly gales, on the extremity of a peninsula to fortify which against land attack would be the easiest thing possible, and with a sufficient coast space to contain such public buildings and stores as would be required—a space at present occupied by a town of two thousand inhabitants. An English engineer of the first rank in his profession declared Varignano to be the most perfect harbour of nature's making he had ever seen, and capable, by a moderate outlay, of being made one of the strongest naval stations in the world. It was not, however, immense enough for a people who have already imagined themselves masters of the Mediterranean and sole owners of the commerce with the Levant—whose word is to be law within the Strait of Gibraltar, and whose flag is to float supreme over the tideless sea. They must have Spezia. Spezia as a naval station reads like a prairie for a review ground!—a vast savannah for a field-day! What navy, what fleet, could possibly be commensurate with such a station? They talk of a

contract for sixty iron frigates ! Sixty ? Great as the number is, it ought to be six hundred. And all this, as I said a while ago, with a deficient exchequer and a depreciated credit. If they be really serious in what they are projecting—if they are honestly in earnest as to these great undertakings—is it not because, like M'Guppy, they feel there is “no use in economy when one has got nothing”?

A WORD FOR AN ILL-USED CLASS.

“GIVE a dog a bad name” was never more forcibly illustrated than by the manner in which the world regards what is called tuft-hunting. Now tuft-hunting, like usury, has got into disfavour entirely by the class of men who have adopted it as a career instead of accepting it as an accident of their station. The ancient Parasite was very little more or less than a modern diner-out : he was a gentleman of parts and ability, with great adaptiveness and consummate tact ; he was an admirable talker, and, what is far rarer, a finished listener. He was not as rich as the great man to whose fortunes he attached himself, but in every other respect he was infinitely his superior. His task in life was a difficult one. It was not merely to exercise his mental gifts and display his acquirements for the pleasure and instruction of his host and his friends, but so to merge his individuality

in his accomplishments, that nothing of the man remained but what was amusing or interesting.

If I had lived in those days, and been rich enough to do it, I should have surrounded myself with these creatures. I'd have had them of every fashion and age and complexion. I cannot imagine a pleasanter exercise of wealth than to create about one an atmosphere of wit, sound sense, knowledge of life, and refined taste—all dashed with that humorous appreciation of humanity, in its varied aspects, which is the quality of all others that makes a man truly companionable. I believe the Greeks understood this thoroughly, and I take it that they are not more our masters in marble than in the wonderful perfection to which they elevated tuft-hunting.

Instead, therefore, of discouraging the practice—ridiculing its use and decrying its habit—I would like, if I could, to restore it to its ancient dignity, and install it where it ought to be, amongst the fine arts. First of all, no man can possibly be a proficient in the art who is not very considerably and very variously gifted. The tuft-hunter—I hate the word, but I have no other—is essentially a man highly accomplished; but he is, besides, a man of emergencies. It is not alone that he must do each thing a little better than any one else, but he must be ready to do it at any moment he may be called on.

While, in the exercise of his judgment, he must be prepared to be witty; and under the dreariest infliction of listening to a proser, he must be ready to recover himself and display his faculties in all their brightness.

Wide as is his knowledge, it is not one half so wide as his sympathy. He sympathises with my lord and my lady, and with my lord's friend and my lady's admirer, and with the eldest son and all the daughters, and occasionally, of a morning in the garden, with the governess, and always with the head groom, and very often with the gardener; he sympathises with the butler and the gamekeeper, and he has even a little sympathy for the chaplain, who loves it much, and fancies it means promotion.

Now, your real tuft-hunter—your man who aspires to the high honour of the “caste”—is not to be confounded with one of those useful but humble followers who secure boxes at the opera or take seaside lodgings for the children after the measles; he is no “grand utility” to cheapen china and hire a wet-nurse; he is simply a man who, having qualities to secure a great career in life, is too self-indulgent and too indolent to exercise them, except for amusement, and who consents to merge certain things that are not very palatable to him in his pursuit of an existence which shall afford him many of the enjoy-

ments that wealth provides, and one thing which he values still more—a splendid arena for his personal display. There is no saying what thousands of promising men—men with the seeds of great things in them—have fallen from virtue through the fascination of a society in which they shone! How is that fellow of “infinite humour,” he who sets the table in a roar, to forego the ecstasy of his triumph and go up to his room and work! Do you expect that the wit who enlivened your dull dinner, or the graceful narrator who charmed your company, leaves you at midnight to sit down to Term Reports or Crown cases reserved? But for him what would have been your turtle and your truffles, your blackcock and your burgundy? You know in your heart that your guests would have growled away over their dreary dinner in a spirit that almost anticipated indigestion, and yet for him you have no milder name, at least when you talk of your neighbour’s adjunct, than Tuft-hunter!

Has it never occurred to you that, if you were the poor man and he the rich one, it is ten thousand to one if you ever met or dined at the same table? Has it ever struck you that all the gold plate on your sideboard never shone with the brilliancy of his wit, or that, even in the blundering way you told it, his smallest jest has made you a “success” for the week after you learned it? Have you never found out

that you yourself derived from his presence a *verve* and a geniality that Maraschino or Curaçoa couldn't give you? and do you not know in your heart why your house is called pleasant and your dinners delightful?

In the lavish exuberance of his great resources, he goes on giving you day by day what might make him great, rich, honoured, and courted! You may imagine you are his entertainer, while you have supplied nothing but the grossest part of the feast. What you have really given him is the arena whereon to display his strength and exercise his activity, and for this he is grateful to you, for he likes the pastime even better than you do.

You are the host, but *he* is the entertainer of your company. It is you who feed, but it is he who charms, delights, and transports them. The "Patrons" know it, they feel it, they recognise in themselves stores of appreciation they never knew of before; and, after an hour or two of Olympian enjoyment, they jog homeward trying to recall his witty rejoinders and his "apropos," and to make themselves illustrious in some remote sphere where he has never been heard of.

We are constantly told that the great business of the State is not carried on by mighty ministers and right honourable secretaries, but by a number of

rather saturnine-looking men, of expressions compounded of sternness and submission, who may be met crossing the Green Park every morning at eleven and seen coming back by six or seven o'clock. These, we are told, are the wheel-horses who do all the work, leaving the leaders to show the way and display their grand action. Now, I am certain that the great pleasure of nearly every house in the dinner-giving world depends on men whose names figure on no door-plates, who are not assessed to large figures in the municipal rates, and who might be traced at a late hour of night to very small habitations about St James's Street.

Think what dismay there would be in Downing Street if all the heads of departments struck work and held out for some exorbitant conditions of one sort or another. There would be a dire confusion, there is no doubt; for though some of the minor priests might be able to say mass as well as the dignitaries, the ministers and right honourable secretaries accustomed to Mr T. and Mr R. wouldn't believe it, and the public business would stand still. And now fancy what would become of a London season if the whole tuft-hunting profession were to declare with one voice, "We'll not amuse you any more. Never a story, never a *mot*, so much as a pun, shall you have at any price. We are an ill-used class ;

and until you come to recognise our true claims, and show yourselves disposed to accord us what we feel to be our right, we shall stand out to the last. You imagine you can coerce us by denying us your venison and grouse; some of us have tried mutton, and actually liked it. We hear daily of different sorts of food that will support life, so don't imagine that we are to be starved into compliance."

There must be something intensely natural in the human parasite, or we should not see him as we do, in every rank and class and condition of society. Like the "*pallida Mors*" of the satirist, they knock alike at the palace and the cottage. They solace the ennui of the bishop, they amuse the retirement of the beadle. Indeed, so far as my own experience goes, I think I have never seen anything so near perfection as the episcopal parasite. Not taking vegetable life as the type of his vocation—like some inferior artists, who are content to wind themselves like ivy around their patron oak—these men seek their inspirations in the animal kingdom, and act as the jackal to the lion.

How I recall one of these going forth to hunt out the prey for his master, beating every cover, scouring every thicket, well knowing the sort of game he can bring down; and even in some cases—like certain courtiers we have heard of—hamstringing the deer

that he may be more easily shot ; and how I see again before me the episcopal sportsman with his gun at full cock, and ready for the signal to fire. And what showers of applause have followed the explosion. "What wit, what readiness !" exclaim they ; "never at a loss ! You heard what his Grace said to ——." At such displays as these—I have assisted at more than one of them—it is the jackal I have admired far more than the lion ; the restless activity to scent out the game, converted, the instant after discovery, into perfect indifference. To see him you would say he was a chance passer, a careless spectator, who had happened to come that way. To insure a high success, he must cut off all complicity with his chief. Having given the cue as the prompter, he must hasten before the foot-lights and appear as public. These are high gifts, let me tell you. No wonder that the men who possess them become archdeacons.

Kings have their courtiers—great lords their followers ; but no men are so admirably served by their parasites as the bishops. They take to their calling, too, with such a zest, such a hearty will. Their admiration for his Grace has a false air of piety about it—it is so suave, so deferential, so full of homage.

What sorry practitioners lords-in-waiting and

equerries look after these men ! what inferior talents do they bring to their calling !

More than once in a glorious reverie have I caught myself imagining I was a bishop, and had a chaplain in waiting to stimulate me, to note, and to record and circulate my drolleries.

Were it only for the sake of these men, I am sorry when I hear a sneer against parasites. Let us remember that but for the drooping branches of the acanthus, itself a parasite, we should never have had the tasteful beauty of the Corinthian capital ; and let us bear in mind what a comfort the oak must be to the ivy, and that if the tree be a true monarch of the woods, there will be a height where the creeper has never soared to, nor can ever come.

THE END.



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